SEVENTY-TWO YEARS' CHURCH RECOLLECTIONS

HENRY PHIPPS DENISON

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SEVENTY-TWO YEARS' CHURCH RECOLLECTIONS

WORKS BY THE REV. PREBENDARY
HENRY PHIPPS DENISON, B.A.

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THE MAKING OF GODS
THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE
THE LORD IN HIS TEMPLE
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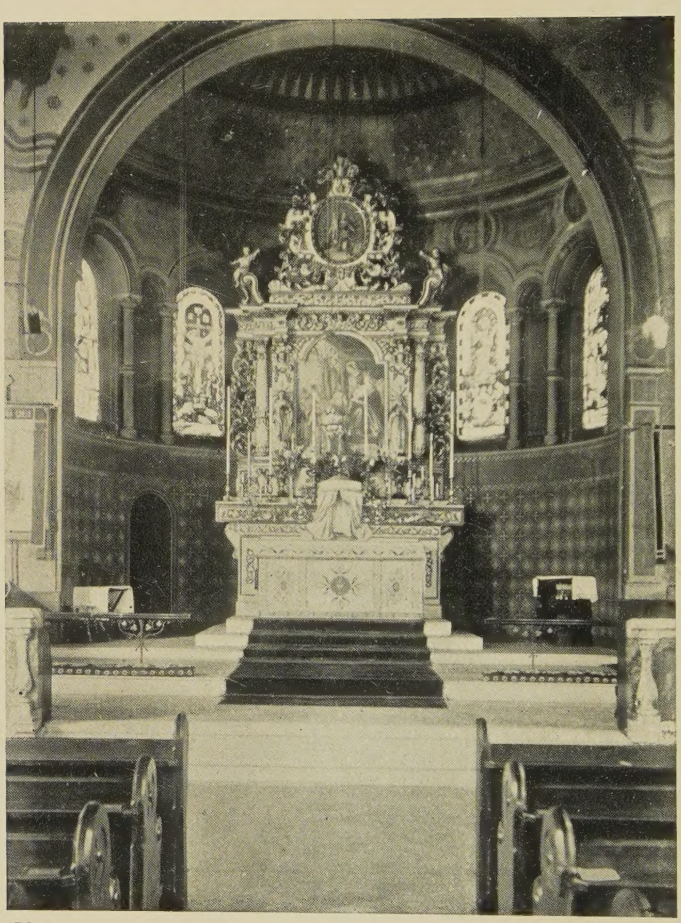

Photo *R.L.S.*

S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
NORTH KENSINGTON, W.

SEVENTY-TWO YEARS' CHURCH RECOLLECTIONS

BY

HENRY PHIPPS DENISON, B.A.

PREBENDARY OF WELLS

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

I FEEL that the publication of these recollections calls for something of the nature of an apology. I put forward two circumstances in my life as constituting that apology :—

(*a*) That my childhood was passed in Tasmania and New South Wales.

(*b*) That upon arriving in England as a boy of thirteen, East Brent became my home for thirty-five years.

To the first of these two circumstances I owe the fact that in experience, though not in years, I can go behind the Oxford Movement, and am therefore old of my years ; while the long sojourn in one place (and consequent slow growth) kept me so young that, in my twenty-two years of London life and work, I found myself hand and glove with the next generation of Catholic clergy, at a time when my contemporaries were just a little inclined to stand aloof from them. So that while on the one hand my experiences make me old of my years, on the other I am quite absurdly young !

Under these circumstances I have thought that my seventy-two years' Church Recollections may not be otherwise than of some use.

HENRY P. DENISON.

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD, 1853–61

I WAS born in Government House, Hobart Town, in the year 1848. My mother taught her children to read by the time they were four years old, and then, or thereabouts, we began to go to church. So I date my first memories of a church about the opening of the year 1853.

These reminiscences are intended to be ecclesiastical rather than personal; but I must, in order to be understood, give one glance at the home life, which gives a good picture of old-fashioned Church of England piety, as it lay behind the Oxford Movement, which may be said practically at that time to have left us untouched in that far-away corner of the world.

We were well grounded in an unquestioning faith. We read the Bible every day with our father, and learnt the Catechism with our mother. I have no hesitation in saying that Sunday was to me a perpetual gala day. Certain occupations and amusements were laid aside on Sunday; there was a general atmosphere of peace; and the dear father and mother laid themselves out to make the day a

really happy one for us children. Church-going was a matter of course for the whole household, and an atmosphere of peace and holiness hung over the whole day.

I mention this because, at one time, it was rather the fashion to pity children of those days, and to imagine that Sunday was made intolerable to them and sat upon them as a kind of nightmare. I can only say most emphatically that my experience was the exact contrary of this idea, and that Sundays were among the chiefest joys of a most happy childhood.

Let me now try to sketch my first church as I knew it. We entered by the vestry door, and passed by a passage straight into the Governor's pew, without going into the body of the church at all. We found ourselves in a large square pew about the size of a small room. The pew was higher than our heads, and there was a curtain about eighteen inches deep at the top; so that I cannot describe the church, because I never saw it! Once in my life I was taken out of the pew door into the church, and once only, viz., at the baptism of my younger brother. Just outside the pew was the "three decker." We had a good view of the top deck, i.e. the pulpit, and a somewhat subdued view of the middle deck, where we could see the head and shoulders of the officiating clergyman behind a sort of balustrade, which gave to my young mind the idea of being in a kind of cage. The lower deck,

i.e. the clerk's seat, was quite hidden from us. By a process of reasoning I arrived at the conclusion that the said " three decker " must have stood in the centre of what (if there were such a thing) might have been called the chancel arch, there being, as I imagine, a shallow chancel behind it. We could see part of the gallery and the organ ; and standing on a stool, as we small ones did, I could see through the chinks of the overtopping curtain the bonnet of a mysterious somebody in the next pew. Such was my first church as far as, in my very limited way, I was able to see it !

" Poor children ! " (I can fancy some sympathizing High Church person say) " How dreadful for them to have had such a dismal vision of a church." No, my High Church friend, we were not at all to be pitied. The very limited view gave a sense of mystery that is all too often lost in a modern " High Church " church. We are now familiar with every nook and cranny of our churches ; we help to decorate them, change Altar frontals, see to all the ins and outs of the sanctuary, etc., etc. It is all part of everyday life. But it inevitably wears off some of the bloom of the aloofness and mystery of my first church. When, after the Litany, the clergyman disappeared out of the cage of the middle deck, and one heard his voice from a new place, in a somewhat darkened recess that one had never seen and could never see, there was a sense of the mysterious, of the unknown, about it. In later

days one would have looked to see whether he took the Eastward position or went to the North end, and would have docketed him in one's mind accordingly. There, he was part of a mystery, a far-off person, whom we never saw outside of the church, and who was above criticism in my home.

I do not want to be simply a *laudator temporis acti*. My first church was not ideal, though I had no fault to find with it. But one cannot but feel that, in the immense amount that we have gained, we have to cut a certain loss; and we find, I think, that loss in the "miss" of the element of aloofness and mystery that I seem to find behind the Oxford Movement. The church and the clergy, with their faults and failings and oddities, have come out into the open, and are all perfectly familiar to us; they are the topic of incessant chatter and criticism, and one cannot but feel, in looking back as I do to my childhood's home, that a little less intimate knowledge, and a little more of aloofness and mystery, might have helped one's ideals.

In 1855 my father was moved to the governorship of New South Wales, and for the next five years our home was at the Governor's house at Sydney. Here I encountered my second church. The pews were not quite so high, there were no curtains above them, and for the first time I was able to look out and take stock of what I saw.

The church was a very large oblong building, with a gallery round the West, North and East, the

South side being without one. The " three-decker " was half-way down the church, facing North ; the organ was in the gallery immediately facing it. On the East wall, under the gallery, were the Ten Commandments, in round-headed panels, in gold letters on a black ground. Against the East wall, under the Ten Commandments, were two or three rows of pews. In front of these stood the font ; and in front of the font, within a complete circular rail, stood the Altar ! It was the first time I had ever seen an Altar ! There was much less of mystery here ; and one's imagination had to exercise itself on what it must be like to be in the West gallery, so far away, or what one would discover if once one could come in or go out at the side door. We entered by a door in the East wall, passing the Altar, in its circular rails, on the way to our pew. The Altar was draped in red velvet, the pulpit, in addition to a cushion, had a large hanging of red velvet with the Sacred Monogram in gold surrounded with gold rays. Altar and pulpit were draped in black during the whole of Lent ; and I remember the sort of thrill with which, on Easter Day, one greeted the return of the velvet pulpit hangings !

On looking back to my second church, I seem to see that a whiff of the Oxford Movement must by this time have blown into Sydney. In the first place, my dear father and mother found, to their great delight, that here there was Communion every Sunday. Then there were little indications of what,

in after life, one would recognize as Tractarian shibboleths. The bulk of the congregation did not leave till after the Church Militant prayer; we turned to the East for the Gospel and the Creed. Small straws, but not without their significance! We also in my second church went to church every day in Holy Week, which in those days used to be called Passion Week. We heard a rumour that in another church in the town there was a certain surpliced choir. But, of course, these things excited no comment beyond the thankfulness of the dear parents for the weekly Communion. In other respects we were quite old-fashioned; the gown was worn in the pulpit, the clerk officiated in the lower deck, and we sang Tate and Brady's Psalms, which were in those days bound up with the Prayer Book, with two or three hymns as an appendix. What I think I may with justice call the tyranny of the hymn, under which we now groan, had not begun.

Such were the only churches of which I had experience until I was between twelve and thirteen years old. It never occurred to me that they were dull or in any way wanting. Sunday and its church-going continued to be a joy. This again I think to be worth mentioning. I may be wrong, for I have not had much experience of boys in home life since I was thirteen; but it seems to me that it is taken for granted that the genus boy should hate and rebel against church-going. I can only speak for

this boy, but I emphatically say that to him church-going held no terrors, and that to him the dullness that is supposed to weigh so heavily on the average child did not exist.

From the consideration of my two first churches, I must pass to one or two considerations about myself. Long before I was twelve I had made up my mind that " to be a clergyman " was the future to which I aspired ; and my choice was quite accepted by the kindest and best of parents. I was a boy of quiet tastes ; and, in the years that lay between eight and twelve, had already been accustomed to be a good deal by myself. I came about midway in a large family, and when we moved to Sydney my two elder brothers were sent to England to make their home with my grandfather, so as to go to a Public School. I shared a tutor with the son of a friend, and three days in the week rode on my pony the five miles that lay between his home and mine ; so that I had abundant time to exercise my imagination on all sorts of things, and to be used to being my own company. I can see now how this apparently accidental circumstance was paving the way for much that was to follow. I was also given to prowling about by myself, and so unconsciously cultivated a faculty for idealizing things. Twice, I think, in the course of my prowlings, I timidly adventured myself into the Roman Cathedral, feeling that I was doing something rather naughty. I remember that the outside of the said Cathedral, with the Arch-

bishop's palace adjoining it, seemed to me like a bit of Spain.

I was immensely fond of the various books of prints that my father had, and would pore over them again and again, until I knew them by heart. I had a quite distinct idea in my mind of what Germany, France and Italy were like, and was delighted to find, when in after life I first visited these countries, that I had correctly grasped their prevailing atmosphere. Among the pictures in which I delighted were two engravings that impressed my childish mind. One was a picture of the interior of St. Jacques at Liège: the other a little picture with a mysterious title, "Monks returning from Midnight Mass." Under the influence of these pictures, I can remember fancying myself, as I went along the passage to my bedroom, an ecclesiastic of dignity, sprinkling Holy Water as I went, little dreaming that it should ever happen to me to do this very thing.

So before I was twelve, my priestly vocation was there, as it were, in embryo; and I had been providentially placed in the holy and blessed home, under the very circumstances that cultivated my imagination and taught me to stand, to a certain extent, by myself: and all this, without a touch of the Oxford Movement, before I was twelve years old!

I want here to draw a moral before I close this chapter of my childhood. We live in the days of much instruction and catechisms and classes,

Everything is supposed to depend upon definite instruction. Now I have not a word to say against that instruction; God forbid! But I question whether, in imparting this definite instruction, we sufficiently bear in mind our childish experiences. Speaking for myself, I can only say that indirect influence has played a much larger part in my education than direct. The solid foundation was laid in my blessed home by the knowledge of the Bible and of the Catechism. We children had our Catechism at our fingers' ends. This is the way that our all-wise Mother the Church indicates. Our education was based on the true and proper foundation. Then, with that solid foundation securely laid, we were able to assimilate indirect influences. There was little, if any, *explanation* of the Catechism. We were taught to *know* it. In this, my dear mother, in her wisdom, was all unconsciously following the lead of the great Bishop Dupanloup, who insists so strongly on the necessity of children knowing the text of the Catechism, inasmuch as all future instruction must, in his strong phrase, *rouler sur le Catechisme*. I remember, when I got to school, my astonishment at the ignorance of boys much older than myself as regards the Bible and the Catechism.

Nowadays we are eager and anxious to explain everything as we go, with the result that the *text* of the Catechism takes a very back seat. Our appeal is made to the intellect rather than to the soul. We want in our dealings with souls to "take them in and

do for them." Two things we overlook: (*a*) the grace of the Holy Spirit in the souls of God's elect; and (*b*) the imaginative faculty of childhood. With children of eight, nine or ten before us, we forget how we used to think when we were eight, nine or ten years old. We are not content to sow seed and to wait until it springs up "we know not how." Our dealing is rather with heads than with hearts.

The seeds of my Catholic life were sown, in all faith and trust, in the dear old home where the Oxford Movement was quite unknown.

CHAPTER II

EAST BRENT—EARLY DAYS

MY father was moved in January, 1861, from the Government of New South Wales to that of Madras. The result of this was that, after a month's sojourn at Madras, the four of us who formed the middle group of our large family were taken to England by our mother to make our home with my uncle and aunt, Archdeacon and Mrs. Denison, who had an exceptionally large vicarage at East Brent, and had no children of their own.

After a delightful journey by the old overland route (which gave a glimpse of Cairo and the Pyramids) we arrived in England, paying first a visit to my grandfather in Sussex. During this visit I was taken to London by an uncle, when in the Abbey I saw for the first time in my life laymen in surplices. This impressed me a good deal; and I remember thinking that the choir of the Abbey, with the Canons in their stalls and the singers in their places, carried me into a sort of mediæval atmosphere. This is hardly the impression that the Abbey has made upon me since. I was very young then, and had seen little or nothing.

On the 5th June, 1861, we arrived at East Brent. I finally left East Brent after the Easter of 1896. But I am anticipating.

The church at East Brent was a revelation to my young mind. I had never seen anything at all like it. In my youthful ignorance I thought it the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. The nave was seated with fourteenth-century oak benches, with magnificently carved poppy-head ends. The walls of the chancel were coloured dark red, the chancel windows being all of painted glass. In the North aisle were two splendid windows of mediæval glass. At the West end an old organ of Lincolns stood in a Jacobean carved and panelled organ loft. The Altar was vested in red velvet, with a band of needlework with gold letters on a pale blue ground, forming what might have been called a superfrontal; a small dossal of needlework with a cross worked in the middle of it filled the space between the Altar and the East window; and last, but by no means least, two large heavy pewter candlesticks stood on the Altar. There was an external atmosphere of beauty and peace here that struck me at once, and I fell in love with it.

But looking at the East Brent Church of those days in the light of experience that was soon to come, one can see that, even for those days, it lagged far behind the typical churches of the Oxford Movement. There was no sequence of colours: it lacked the surpliced choir, which in those days was

held to be the all-important thing. (I may mention here, in passing, that right up to my uncle's death, in 1896, this church had what I should now call the proud pre-eminence of never having had such a thing.) Communion was only once a month. There were no proper Altar appointments, such as burse, veil, and proper linen; and, if I remember right, at this time the Eastward position was not taken by the celebrant. But of all these things I was, of course, blissfully unconscious; as I was also of the havoc and damage which had been wrought by premature restoration. But, with all these drawbacks, there was one thing that marked it as of the Catholic Movement: I mean the daily Office. Day by day Matins was said at 8.30 and Evensong at six. Litany was said on Wednesdays and Fridays at twelve.

It is difficult for Catholics to-day to understand the huge and essential importance that the daily Office had in the Tractarian times. It is not too much to say that it was, for the time, to them the *articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*. One cannot read the history of the Catholic Revival in England and not see the slow, steady, patient growth that characterized it, in which we discern the finger of God. Things that are now taken as matters of course were successively, one by one, *the* vision of the Catholic Revival. One bit of Catholic truth rose after another, like the various constellations in the sky; and each, as it came to the fore, was

the point to be secured. And, as a simple matter of fact, it was the Divine Office that came first of all.

At every stage of the Catholic Movement we find three sets of people: (1) The pioneers, who have already gone forward to attack the next entrenchment of the enemy; (2) the main body of the movement, who are consolidating the ground already gained; (3) the hangers-on, who have not the wit or faith to see what underlies external manifestation, and who therefore make a hopeless mess of the whole thing, vulgarizing everything and robbing it of all significance. But here again I am somewhat anticipating. In the early sixties the pioneers, thank God, were hard at work (mainly in London) in the beginning of what is known as the "Ritual Movement," contending for the truth as regards the Mass; and East Brent in those days was consolidating, in the faithful daily recitation of the Divine Office, the ground that had already been gained. But the "mixed multitude," those terrible camp-followers and hangers-on, had hardly yet emerged, as they were so soon to do, to hinder and thwart the movement by their senseless vulgarity. If they had appeared at all in those early days, it would have been in the form of those who, quite unable to understand the essence of the Divine Office, were thinking it desirable to have "more frequent services." But as yet they were doing comparatively little harm. I shall have more to say about these noxious hinderers of the Catholic Revival as time goes on.

Meanwhile I should like to call attention to two things that may partly account for the lagging behind of East Brent.

(1) It is inevitable that the Catholic Movement must be academic before it could come to be practical. It is therefore not to be wondered at that men should be found at every stage of the movement who are, in principle, in advance of their practice. I soon learnt that my uncle had, in 1855, been brought to trial before the then Archbishop for teaching what, in the somewhat clumsy expression of those days, was called "The Real Objective Presence," involving as this did the truth as regards the "reception" of the wicked. In the famous (or rather infamous) trial at Bath he was deprived of his preferments by the sentence of the Archbishop's court. The sentence was reversed on a legal point. But here at East Brent, having stood in the forefront of the fight for the truth of Real Objective Presence, he was, nevertheless, content with monthly Communions and the North end! The truth of the matter is that he was at this time, and to a large extent throughout his life, thinking, I may say, exclusively of the sacrament of Communion. The truth as to the sacrifice of the Mass, though academically stated by many, notably perhaps by Archdeacon Wilberforce and by Preb. Sadler, had not in any way practically come to the fore among the main body of the Movement, though it was for this very thing that the pioneers were so

earnestly contending in London and elsewhere at this time. I think I may say that, in my uncle's mind, the daily Mass would be rather the opportunity for daily Communion than anything else, and that a Mass without communicants would all along the line have been to him anathema. But, having said this, I want to add that his fearless and generous nature would put him in the forefront of the battle of the Ritual times, and his true sympathy was always at the service of the Ritualists, even though he could not go along with them in all for which they were contending. It was the one fact of the objective reality of the Blessed Sacrament that he had grasped. He was essentially not a theologian, and did not think out to the full the inevitable consequences of this great fact.

(2) To those whose grasp of truth is academic rather than practical, it is not perhaps unnatural that they should wish others to be content with the academic contemplation of truth that satisfies themselves. I shall have to revert to this point later on, for we shall find this tendency to be an important factor all along the line. My uncle's noble sympathy with pioneers who were ahead of him set an example which has not always been followed.

After this somewhat lengthy digression, I return to myself, confronted at the age of thirteen with the East Brent Church of 1861. Apart from the orderly beauty of the church itself, it was the daily Office

which now stood before me. Ah! what did this mean? It meant the first dawnings on one's mind of worship pure and simple as such. Hitherto it had seemed a matter of course that Christians should assemble themselves on Sundays and great Festivals, and being so assembled, it was a matter of course that they should be furnished with some form of Common Prayer, followed by, even where not regarded as a mere prelude to, a sermon. The congregation seemed to come first; the Office seemed to be for their common convenience. But here was quite a new order of things. The Office came first. The congregation might or might not be there; that made no difference. The congregation were quite a secondary consideration. It was a continual round of uninterrupted worship; not one day more than another day; the parish priest in the reciting of his office representing the whole Body and, in particular, the souls especially commended to his charge. It was indeed a new vision. There was as yet no daily Mass. The sacrifice was, for the present, a sealed book. But here, at any rate, as far as it went, there was the Catholic vision of the everyday life of the church. It would yet be some time before I should understand the "intention" of the Church in the Divine Office, viz., the continual commemoration of the Hours of the Passion; but here, at any rate, was a new vision of the worship of the Church.

I went to school at Winchester in the autumn of

1861. The old chapel impressed me much: the old mediæval building with its glorious great Jesse window, the Grinling Gibbon panelling, the old organ in its picturesque loft, the picture of the Annunciation over the Altar, all made a most dignified and impressive *tout ensemble*. I may remark that after a lapse of fifty years I stood once more, a few years ago, in the old college chapel. I never want to stand in it again. That enemy of our peace, the pedantic restorer, has been at his destructive work! Grinling Gibbons panelling, old organ in its loft, picture—all have disappeared. The bare walls have brand-new stalls along their whole length, and the verger proudly tells us that these glaring new things are "thirteenth century." Exactly! Oh! the pedantry of these destroyers of our peace! Your pedantic restorer comes into the building that has been committed to his ruthless hands, looks round, and says—"This is a thirteenth-century building." Well, none of us supposed it was Queen Anne. And having delivered himself of this pompous dictum, he proceeds to tear away everything that is not thirteenth-century, destroying every trace of history and every vestige of interest.

With the idea of the Divine Office germinating in my mind the whole thing appealed to me at once. There were the stalls of the warden and Fellows, the scholars of the foundation in surplices on Sundays and Festivals, the singing boys and men also on the

foundation, as were the chaplains who sang the Office. It was all of a piece with the new vision of the Divine Office, of which East Brent had given me the beginning.

It was at school that I was confirmed and made my first Communion. We were prepared for Confirmation by the Head Master. Instructions were given, of which we assiduously took notes. I have not now the faintest idea as to what those instructions conveyed. The fact of being prepared for Confirmation was a solemn thing, and one was impressed with the solemnity of it; but I knew absolutely nothing about the essence of Confirmation and Communion until long after my own Confirmation and first Communion. And in my old age I say "Why should I?" I have had occasion, in my book on *Prayer Book Ideals*, to fall foul of that modern invention, "the Confirmation Class." Everything nowadays is supposed to rest on the intellectual appreciation on the part of the candidate of the exact grace that he is going to receive. We are not satisfied unless, in the six weeks or so of the terrible Confirmation class, we think that we have made theologians of our poor little victims. We lean upon understanding rather than upon grace; the human side is pressed out of all proportion, and the Divine side has to take a back seat. This is all of a piece with the subjectivity of Protestantism. Do we wait to give a child food until it can satisfactorily answer certain questions as to the

process of digestion ? What nonsense it all is ! No ! worse than nonsense ; for it points to the melancholy fact that Christianity has come to be considered as a system, or bundle of opinions, rather than as a life. Moreover, when we come to think about it, these elaborate Confirmation classes are not contemplated by the Church. After all said and done, Sunday schools and classes are but a very clumsy makeshift. We are driven to them because of the failure of parents and sponsors to do the duty imposed upon them by the Church. What is supposed to have become of all the years that lie between Baptism and the Confirmation class ? But this, after all, is perhaps a secondary matter. The really important error lies in the failure to trust grace, and in the idea that is apparently all too prominent, viz., that the intellectual appreciation of the recipient is the main factor to the reception of a sacrament.

Anyhow, the fact remains that, while I knew the Catechism thoroughly from my home training, the Confirmation class added *absolutely nothing* to my previous stock of knowledge, and, as far as I was concerned, the holder of the said class was merely wasting his time and trouble. I was immensely impressed by both my Confirmation and my first Communion ; but about Confirmation and Communion in the theological sense I knew nothing whatever.

In this connection there comes to my mind a perfectly delightful little book called *Copsley Annals*,

It deals with Church of England life in the eighteenth or quite early nineteenth century. We have been rather trained to turn up our noses at the eighteenth century, with the single exception of the Evangelical Revival, of which it is the stock thing to say that it was all very well as far as it went. My own impression is that it was nothing of the sort. Like Methodism, the supineness of Churchmen gave it a handle and a shade of excuse : but, like Methodism it was anti-Church in its principles. I venture to think that the Catholic Movement would have grown more easily and naturally without the Evangelical Revival behind it. That it would have been better so, God forbid that I should say ; but I do feel that the Catholic Revival owes little or nothing to the Evangelical Movement. Now, in *Copsley Annals* there is a delightful picture of the Confirmation class of those despised and sneered at times. The good old vicar sits in the church with the candidates before him, simply hearing if they can say the Catechism, and passing them accordingly ! I think, for all our cleverness in later days, we may still learn something to our advantage from the eighteenth century !

My stay at Winchester was not long. I got somewhat run down in health and was taken home to East Brent to be under a tutor till I went to Oxford. East Brent had taught me something about the Divine Office. As time went on, I learnt something about " the Real Objective Presence "

and the Apostolical Succession. I was taught that we are much nearer to Roman Catholics than we are to Protestant Dissenters. The tide was rising.

CHAPTER III

OXFORD

I WENT up to Oxford in the autumn of 1866, having matriculated at Christ Church.

I did not look forward to Oxford with any pleasure. I was a quiet, somewhat shy lad, very much of a home-bird; and the thought of plunging once more into something akin to school life somewhat dismayed me. My ideas of Oxford had been rather moulded upon Verdant Green; and the prospect of that overgrown tomboyism was not at all alluring. But to Oxford I must go; so there was nothing for it but to set one's teeth and put up with it.

But oh! how different was the beloved Oxford in its reality from the nightmare of Verdant Green!

The sheer beauty of it caught my imagination at once. It has always seemed to me that Oxford, in its loveliness, is more ideal than real. In wandering about Oxford (which was a never-ending delight to me) I seemed to see here the ideal Italy, there the ideal Spain, etc., etc. The early cultivation of the imaginative faculty stood me in good stead here. I seemed to pass my days in an ideal world of beauty!

But it is with matters ecclesiastical that we are concerned, and therefore I will turn to my ecclesiastical self confronted with ecclesiastical Oxford. My ecclesiastical stock-in-trade, at my entrance upon Oxford life, consisted of the strong idea of the Divine Office, a vision of the Real Objective Presence and of the Apostolical Succession, and a dawning hatred of Protestantism.

Now let us think of the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the Oxford of the sixties. In the first place came the college chapels : here was the Divine Office with the official stateliness that belongs to " quires and places where they sing " : the distinction between those who are on the foundation and those who are not (with the exception of Christ Church, where Commoners as well as students appeared in surplices on Sundays and Festivals, making the choir at Christ Church a never to be forgotten sight on such days) ; the amazing loveliness of the Office at New College and Magdalen, to which one crept again and again with the greatest delight. Yes ! the college chapels were quite a joy in those days. I remember how, in my imaginative way, I used to think that there was something very Spanish about the chapels of New College and Magdalen, while Queen's Chapel rather called me to Italy.

But I soon found my way to such typical churches of the Catholic Movement as dear old St. Thomas's, Holywell, and, a little later on, the little iron church of Cowley St. John. Here I found the consistent

tout ensemble that was so manifestly lacking at East Brent. When, in my old age, I want to conjure up the delightful vision of the English Catholic church of fifty years ago, I seem to see a somewhat dark and mysterious building, with a good deal of coloured glass and dark wood; I see the Altar, on ordinary days vested in green, with a deep red super-frontal, with Cross, two candles, and flowers on the re-table; I also see a credence table on the South side, and probably two standard candles before the Altar. The days of "high art" and "correct colours" had not as yet arisen to mar the sweet simplicity of this vision. The green frontal was not the colour of sickly green-pea soup, but was green with no mistake about it. It probably had two broad intersecting bands of white forming a wide cross the whole side of the frontal, or, as at St. Thomas's, it was "powdered" with groups of conventional flowers. The quiet devotional mystery of the whole thing gave an air of unearthliness that went home to me. I love now, in my old age, to think of such churches as they were fifty years ago. And in those days the noxious brood of camp followers and hangers-on had not begun to flaunt their utterly unintelligent vulgarity in our churches. If one saw a green frontal, one knew the Catholic life and Catholic spirit was there.

Hitherto my ecclesiastical stock-in-trade remained as it was: the Catholic churches at Oxford did no more at first than consolidate the ground already

gained; and as we have noticed, that ground, in my case, was the Divine Office and a deeper appreciation of the Sacrament of Communion. My early experience of Oxford Church life intensified these two things, as it also intensified my hatred of Protestantism. But the Mass, as distinct from sacramental Communion, was quite a sealed book.

Now there had reached us, even in far-away East Brent, a rumour that in Merton College chapel there was a "Choral Communion" at mid-day service on Sundays. There was considerable shaking of heads over this innovation; but naturally I must go to encounter this quite new experience.

The transept of Merton College was a parish church: and, there being no Altar in the transept, the parishioners had the right to use the Altar in the choir of the chapel. It was the then incumbent of the parish, Mr. Sargent, who had dared to introduce the innovation of Choral Communion; and enthusiastic friends had gathered themselves around him. Mr. Allan Webb, afterwards first Bishop of Bloemfontein, was sure to be found there; Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Stainer, the organist at Magdalen, gave his invaluable services as organist for the Choral Communion; and the then curate, Mr. Sackett Hope, was the typical priest of the Oxford Movement. At the Altar were three priests, vested in surplice, stole and M.A. hood, with their backs of course "turned to the congregation"

(which was one of the Protestant complaints of those days), and the M.A. hood made a gleam of colour on the said back. It was most impressive, and in my ignorance I thought I could not do better than leave the eight o'clock Communion in our chapel, and make my Communion Sunday by Sunday under the thrill of the new and delightful experience.

I had soon found in Oxford that every one was free to go his own way, choose his own friends, and follow his own bent; and I naturally soon found myself in the group of Catholic undergraduates. My Catholic friends remonstrated with me over my practice of communicating late in order to be at the Choral Communion, but their remonstrances fell for some time on deaf ears. I had never heard anything about fasting Communion. It was Mr. Mackonochie who first brought this duty to the forefront. I could see no reason why I should cease to communicate at Merton, so pursued my pernicious course in all good faith. But it was not long before the truth dawned upon my own conscience, and I then recanted and returned to eight o'clock Communion in the chapel; and the Choral Communion knew me no more.

In passing, I would note that we have here an illustration of the truth that teaching, after all, is the concern of two people. There must be one to teach and one to be capable of assimilating the teaching. We are all apt to think that a person

is bound to know a thing because he has been told of it. That by no means is the case: and again I would remark how much more our education depends upon indirect influence than upon direct.

It was but gradually that the truth of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass began to dawn upon me. I had soon attached myself to the dear old church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, that historical church where so much pioneer work for the Catholic Revival had been done by that man of God, Mr. Chamberlain. Here I soon became organist. I note here the method of God in the English Catholic Revival, namely, the beginning of the truth as regards the Divine Office. The Office was sung, I think, twice a day. Anyhow, it was sung every evening; and after dinner in Hall I used to slip down each evening, through the byeways that I knew and loved so well, to evensong at St. Thomas's. There were many little things about it at which, in the light of further and better knowledge, one might smile; but the root of the matter was there, and one cannot help noticing what, in these days of many better things, one feels to miss, viz., the peaceful sense of people gathered together at the end of the day for the evening Office. One always found a goodly sprinkling of dear old poor people at the evening Office, and one could not but feel the blessedness of the spiritual rest and refreshment, day by day, that the service must have brought to these dear souls. Like many other beautiful things this

may have to pass, like the flower before the fruit; but I feel quite sure that the passing of it is a matter of regret. There are certain London churches still that bear the stamp of the Catholic Revival of fifty years ago. I said, not long ago, to a dear friend of mine who is vicar of one such church—"You look as if you ought to have daily evensong at eight o'clock." He said—"We do." I am convinced that, amidst the many rites of Catholic religion that we have been able to win, our faithful people would gain much if they would make more effort to join in the daily Office.

On Sunday, at St. Thomas's, the Mass was sung after Matins, Litany and sermon. This probably, in an old-fashioned parish church, was the only arrangement possible; but the result was eminently unsatisfactory. The men singers, who were all old-fashioned people, struck at the singing of the Mass; while the poor little victims, the boys, had no choice in the matter. Undergraduates used to come to help in the singing of the Mass. In passing, I would note that even now, after the experience of fifty years, people are strangely slow at the solving of this difficulty, and the superstition of the necessity, in ordinary parish churches, of the solemn singing of both Matins and Mass still survives in churches where better things might be expected, with a twofold evil consequence: (*a*) that the whims of a congregation have to be satisfied out of the flesh and blood of organists and choirs; and

(*b*) (which is even more important) that we are practically catering, at the expense of the said flesh and blood, for two distinct sets of Christians, viz., Christians who do not believe in the Mass and Christians who do. This is a very grievous wrong indeed.

But to return to St. Thomas's, Oxford. I here came across my first experience of a Religious Community. The Sisterhood of St. Thomas had long been founded, but was still in the delightful stage of comparatively small beginnings. It goes without saying that subsequent religious communities have profited by the almost inevitable mistakes of early pioneers. One feels this as one looks back. It has been my privilege to have known this particular community, in all its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, and its various difficulties, for the last fifty years; and I count this as a real privilege.

Before I leave the consideration of dear St. Thomas's, I should like just to recall the general atmosphere of peace and other-worldliness into which the recollection of it brings me. The old grey church, standing in its quiet little churchyard, with its flag flying from the tower on Church Festivals; the quiet little convent close by, with the sisters and associates; the unbroken round of the daily Office; the sung Mass on Sundays and Festivals, all combined to bring before me the idea of an oasis in the desert. Many things, as one can

see in the light of fuller experience, were wanting; but the gist of the matter was there.

A great annual excitement in those far-away days was the E.C.U. Festival. A choir of undergraduates was formed for the singing of the solemn Mass at SS. Philip and James. I had the privilege of being organist, and very proud and conceited I was at this distinction. As might be expected, there were many ritual absurdities about this function; but we were in blissful ignorance of this. To me it seemed a feast of other-worldliness. It throws a vivid light on the progress of the Catholic Movement that I should remember being told by a friend, long since a Bishop, who was " in the know," that we hoped to be able to have a lay server at the low Mass at St. Thomas's on one of these occasions! However, this advanced stage of proceedings must quickly have been reached, for I soon found myself serving periodically at the convent of the Holy Trinity in Woodstock Road.

The E.C.U. Festival and its choir of undergraduates would produce a curious list of names. I refrain from mentioning the names here because it might, in some instances, provoke inquiry when one considers the present ecclesiastical temper of some of that then band of joyous and enthusiastic undergraduates.

It will be seen how, in our beloved Oxford, Catholic truths were dawning upon me day by day. As yet, however, these were more or less of the nature

of *purpurei panni*. It would be yet some time before they would be co-ordinated on Catholic principles. And here again I must digress for a moment to note the Infinite Patience of God in dealing with His poor foolish children. Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, gently and tenderly we are led along as we are "able to bear it," and it is well that those who in later years have been, as it were, born into the Catholic Revival should know something of the slow method by which, in the providence of God, some of us older men grew into it.

The next truth that had to rise upon my horizon was that of the Sacrament of Penance. I was driven to my first Confession at the age of nineteen. I cannot remember whether Confession had been urged upon me by my Catholic friends. If so, like the necessity of fasting Communion, it had not as yet reached my own conscience. What drove me to my first Confession was a quite chance conversation between two friends in my room, which had no reference whatever to Sacramental Confession. Truly "the wind bloweth where it listeth." Again, if I were to mention names, it might cause some little surprise. The die having been cast, my kind Catholic friends were helpful and good to me, and in a short time I found myself in the somewhat awful predicament of having to go to see Dr. Pusey about it. In these days, when the Sacrament of Penance is a matter of course, and confessionals

are regularly served at appointed times, it is difficult perhaps for Catholics to imagine how formidable it was to have to ring at the door bell of a strange priest, state one's business, and make an appointment. But this is what we had to do when our conscience convicted us of our need of the Sacrament of Penance; and well I remember going round Tom Quad before I could summon up courage to ring Dr. Pusey's bell.

It was, of course, my own subjective need that was uppermost in my mind at this time, rather than the position of the Sacrament of Penance in the Economy of God. It would be yet some time before I could recognize the fact that "a quiet conscience" is an objective reality, not a subjective sentiment; and so I went on in my muddly way, and it was a whole year before I again rang that awe-inspiring bell; but by that time I had more or less learned my lesson, and grasped the truth as to "a quiet conscience": and again one notes with the deepest thankfulness the loving Patience of God.

Before I leave the subject of the Sacrament of Penance as administered fifty years ago, it may be well, for the instruction of present-day Catholics, if I recall the fact that, in most instances, one had to go through the formidable operation of ringing a door bell and making an appointment. In some churches a priest was to be found in the vestry at certain times, in which case there was a pleasing

uncertainty as to who the priest might be. The only place, as far as I know, where confessions were regularly heard in the open church was St. Alban's, Holborn ; and thither one betook oneself, as to a haven of refuge, whenever one had the chance of so doing.

In those days Compline had a great attraction for us ; and Catholic undergraduates used to meet in each other's rooms each night to say Compline. It was in connection with this that another scruple was removed out of my very Anglican mind. The little compline books of that day had the queer form of Confiteor that had been (to use a stock phrase) "adapted for the use of members of the Church of England." But one of my Catholic friends was reciting the Confiteor as our fellow Christians always do. At this my small Anglican mind somewhat stuck. To confess as a sinner to the blessed Mother of God and the saints, and to ask their prayers, was not as yet within my purview. But I was not long in this pre-eminently unsatisfactory condition ; and very soon the rosary had become my constant devotion.

My Oxford experiences naturally reacted upon East Brent, and the sequence of colours soon found its way there, together with proper altar linen, burses and veils, cruets, etc., which had hitherto been unknown. I need hardly say that weekly and Saints' day Communions had been by that time started by my dear uncle. But great as the

improvement was in many ways, East Brent still lagged behind, and lacked the general "atmosphere" that one had found in the Oxford Catholic churches.

I took my degree in the winter of 1870–71, and was to be ordained to the curacy of East Brent at Trinity, 1871. Just at this time my uncle had a long and very serious illness, which was fraught, as we shall see later on, with far-reaching results at East Brent.

Oxford, to which I had looked forward with misgiving, had been a home of joy and delight. It had profoundly influenced my life by teaching me many things; and I had, in certain ways, shot ahead of my earlier teachers and was able to take an independent stand. I feel that I must have been in many ways a disagreeable, argumentative young man; and I sadly lacked the self-discipline that is the temper of the Catholic life. But the vision of Truth was there, and I owe Oxford more than I can say.

Before saying farewell to Oxford life, I must note another fact which was of enormous value in my Catholic education, viz., foreign travel. I had twice before my Oxford days been taken on to the Continent, and my delight thereat was huge indeed. But these earlier continental visits had nothing to do with matters ecclesiastic. We did not worship in the Catholic churches, and knew nothing whatever about them. But when, in long

vacations, I went abroad with Catholic friends all was changed. It was the church and its worship that was the central point of the whole thing. We escaped, for the time being, out of the atmosphere of more than semi-Protestant England, and Catholic worship and devotion became absolutely familiar to us. It is impossible, I think, to over-estimate the advantage to an English Catholic of travelling in Catholic countries and seeing the Catholic religion at home. I find in my old age the difference between Catholics who have travelled and Catholics who have not. These latter have to learn up their ritual, etc., from books, without having their book-learning checked and corrected by actual experience. I was told long years ago that the Brompton Oratorians used laughingly to say that it is only the Anglican clergy that pay any attention to the sacred congregation of rites. In English Catholic churches, where the priest has not travelled, one is apt to find bits of that terrible fancy ritual of which dear Father Stanton spoke when he said, " I hate the inventions of man in divine service." Or, if one is saved from that by the more accurate knowledge of the untravelled priest, one is oppressed by an appalling " correctness " in the tiniest detail that freezes one, and is in singular contrast to the joyous naturalness that one finds in Catholic countries.

I owe more than I can say to the privilege of having been able to knock about on the Continent, and, though this is somewhat anticipating matters,

I believe that a good deal of the attractiveness of St. Michael's, North Kensington, is due to the fact that, while I lag behind in book knowledge as to matters liturgical, I do know how, as a matter of fact, things are actually done, and where book knowledge has to be checked and corrected by actual experience. When one travels in Catholic countries one learns what is of the essence of the matter and what is not : one sees, for instance, many differences in small matters between the Catholic churches of France, Belgium, Germany and Italy, though all are strictly following the Roman rites ; and one is delivered from the excessive primness that hangs over our Catholic churches when the priest has not travelled but has learnt it all from books.

And now I must say farewell to my dear Oxford, the Alma Mater that helped me so much and has left sweet memories that are a lasting joy.

CHAPTER IV

TWO BOOKS

BEFORE I pass on to the experiences of my clerical life at East Brent, I should like to say something about two books that fell in my way during my Oxford life, which created a profound and lasting impression upon me. The first of these epoch-making books was Wilberforce *On the Incarnation*; the second was Moehler's *Symbolik*, of which an English translation had been brought out at this time under the rather queer title, "Symbolism." I consider that the reading of these two books marked a very distinct stage in my Catholic development.

Wilberforce's great work takes one down to the solid, fundamental bed rock. It shows the Incarnation as the great fact of creation, and paves the way for the Scotist vision to which, in later years, I have found myself drawn in an ever-increasing degree. In trying to express the immense influence that this particular book had upon me at this time, I think I should say that it lay largely in the clear way in which it adjusts the relation between the Incarnation and the Atonement. It shows the

Atonement as having nothing to do with any arrangement or "plan of salvation," but as being the natural and inevitable result of the fact that God the Son condescended to take our nature upon Him even after the Fall; so that Our Lord is Mediator *by nature*, and not by any artificial arrangement. He is, *de facto*, the Head and Representative of the whole generation, the second Adam, from Whom springs the new race of men: and it is this new race of men, sprung from the second Adam, that constitutes the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.

Now I think I may say that, up to this time, one's idea of the relation in which we stood to God had seemed mainly to be that of a *moral* relation. If one had thought about the matter at all, I suppose one would have formulated one's ideas upon the moral basis. The old leaven of the "be good and go to heaven" idea was still in us. Our Lord, by a mysterious something that one would call grace, would help us to be good; and Heaven would be the reward for "being good." If one did one's duty one would get to heaven; if one rebelled against one's duty one would land oneself in hell. Duty was the great motive power; but it was duty *detached from its context.* Wilberforce's book lifted me off the purely moral on to what, in the strictest sense of the word, I should call the *physical* plane. It showed me clearly that the all-important thing is not what one *does*, but what one *is*. It was a

question of *nature*. The good tree will, and must, bring forth good fruit; whereas the corrupt tree will, and must, bring forth corrupt fruit. It is the tree that must be made good. If the tree is good its fruit will certainly be good. Heaven is not the more or less arbitrary reward arranged as a prize for those who have successfully struggled to do certain duties; it is the natural home of those who are partakers of the Sacred Humanity. To put it bluntly, no amount of "doing" would create "being." The doing of duties is the outcome of being of a right nature. We must be certain about our nature before we can hope to do our duty. Our Lord was not, if I may so say, talking along the moral plane when He spoke of the necessity of new birth. He was not uttering a threat. He did not say that those who were not born again *should* not inherit the Kingdom of God: He was stating a simple physical fact, viz., that they *could* not inherit that Kingdom. It is all a question of "φυσις" i.e. of "nature." The fish "cannot" live in the field; the animal "cannot" live under the water; the children of the first Adam "cannot" live the eternal life, which is the perfect vision and perfect knowledge of God. When this light burst upon me things came altogether on a new plane. I understood for the first time the truth as to the Vine and the branches, the Body and the members. The primary question of all was, not whether I should do right, but whether I was

possessed of the nature that alone made right-doing possible.

I would just point out in passing how this vision of the truth, as regards one's relation to God, accentuated the awful responsibility of being in the True Church as the one link with God. If our relation with God were merely a *moral* relation, one held the matter, as it were, in one's own hand. But if the relation be primarily a *physical* one, it is *not* in our own hand. It is here that the joy and glory of finding oneself called by our Heavenly Father in Holy Baptism becomes so intense. And it is here that any question as to the validity of one's position causes such untold anguish. It is this calling in question that forms the actual agony of the Roman controversy ; and it is only those who have experienced what is somewhat lightly called " Roman fever " who know by experience the depth of the anguish of that conflict. And my impression is that it is only those who have known the real agony of having had to battle with themselves the Roman question who can at all adequately or sympathetically help their brethren in Roman difficulties.

Now a little thought will show that here was the beginning, middle, and end of the Catholic religion. Hitherto one's Catholic ideas have been more or less of the nature of *purpurei panni*. They were immensely attractive, and any deviation from them was felt to be a step out of light into darkness, out of joy into greyness and gloom. But now I had

got to the bottom of it all; and the various Catholic doctrines I had assimilated fell into their natural place in the great whole. They were seen to be not arbitrary enactments, however beautiful, but the inevitable outcome and result of the one great Fact of the Incarnation. I began to be a Catholic *on principle.*

Let us try to see in detail some of the immediate results of the true vision of the Incarnation. (1) It emphasized and explained the necessity of Sacraments. I knew, of course, from my childhood, theoretically, that the two great Sacraments are generally necessary to salvation. I now understood why this must necessarily be so. A non-sacramental religion was seen to be hopeless. The ordinary division of Christians into "communicants" and "non-communicants" was as ridiculous as was the extraordinary abuse of the English language that such expressions involved. Communion could not be a sort of first-class compartment for those who liked to travel in greater ease or comfort, while "non-communicants" were a kind of third-class passengers, using the same train and arriving at the same terminus. Of course not! Those people who are so queerly called "non-communicants" were now seen to be simply bad and unnatural Christians. They had received the right nature in their baptism, but they were killing that nature by starvation. They were simply Christians who were living in sin; and if one was to begin

to talk about " non-communicant " Christians, one might just as well talk about " thief " Christians and " murderer " Christians.

Again, one saw the anti-christianism that underlies the modern English ways of dividing men into " good " men and " bad " men. This is clearly an unscriptural division, and quite anti-Prayer Book. The dividing line is between " the children of God " on the one hand and " the children of this world " on the other. There are " good " and " bad " on both sides of the dividing line; but a " bad " Christian is not a heathen, and a " good " heathen is not a Christian. You can train a dog or horse to a great pitch of intelligence; but a clever horse or dog is no more a man than a stupid one. A Christian is what he is because he was *born* so; and a heathen is what he is because he was *born* so. It is a question of difference in *kind*, not of a difference of *degree*.

In proportion as faith has declined amongst us in England, Christianity has come to be looked upon as a very high and pure moral philosophy; and the sermons to which one is doomed to listen in a vast many Church of England pulpits might just as well be addressed to heathens as to Christians! One saw the reason for the necessity of sacraments, and the absolute futility of non-sacramental religions.

(2) With the vision of the Church as the Body of Christ, the new race of men, one came to see that

it is, and must be, Catholicity that is the test of truth in faith, worship and morals. "Burning questions" were no longer formidable. They could only be "questions" at all to those who had lost the vision of the Incarnation as the great central fact of creation. One had a solid foothold; and one began to understand why St. John so persistently says "we know." One had an infallible test of truth and error, viz. the consensus of the new race of men from the beginning; the "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus" of S. Vincent of Lerins.

(3) The axe was laid at the root of the tree of what has well been called Church of Englandism. It became apparent that the sole claim of the Church of England on one's allegiance lay in the fact that the Church of England is simply an integral part of a great whole; and that, as being such, it has brought us into relation to the whole body of Christ. Any idea of a "Church of England" as a separate, self-contained, self-sufficient entity became impossible in the true vision of the Incarnation. Wilberforce had brought me to the solid bed-rock of the whole thing.

Let us now glance at the second book that so profoundly interested me at this time, viz. Moehler's *Symbolik*. This book is of immense value as showing, clearly and distinctly, the real radical difference between Protestantism and the True Religion, in that it sets before one quite clearly the actual

point at which Luther diverged from normal Christianity.

Now in my young days Martin Luther and the English "reformers" had been taken as a sort of axiom about which there was to be no question. I can remember, even as a boy, faintly wondering why these particular people should be able to bind men's consciences for all time; but it was merely a passing wonder, and one continued to take the reformers for granted. But Catholic Oxford soon brought the English reformers toppling down off the absurd and impossible pinnacle upon which English Christians had so foolishly and unintelligently placed them. I was no longer to be browbeaten or overawed by an appeal to "our blessed reformers." But it was Moehler who opened my eyes as to Martin Luther and so as to the Protestantism that mainly sprang from him.

A great deal of dust has been thrown in men's eyes by the fact of Luther's having been mainly exhibited to us as the righteous and indignant opponent of the sale of indulgences, and of the manifest corruptions of the Roman Court. He started, for us, on this vantage ground. But a very little thought will show that to start a new religion in order to get rid of the sale of indulgences or of the corruptions of the Roman Court was rather as if one were to insist on the necessity of using a steam hammer to crack a nut! It was not from these things that Lutheranism sprang. By all

manner of means let the sale of indulgences and the pre-Reformation corruptions of the Roman Court be opposed; but that did not necessitate Lutheranism, nor did it create Lutheranism. Lutheranism must be looked at and judged of quite apart from the opposition to the sale of indulgences and to the corruptions of the Roman Court.

The religion that Martin Luther made (which is rightly called by his name, for it is entirely of his own brand) springs directly out of his wrong-headed idea as to original righteousness. It is in pointing this out that Moehler's book is of such immense service. The normal Christian knows original righteousness as a Grace given by God to our first parents. Luther *would* have it that it was a part of their nature. Now one can hear the amateur in matters theological asking what it can possibly matter whether it was nature or Grace. "There you are, you theologians," the amateur will cry, "splitting hairs as usual. Hang theology!" Yet, *pace* the amateur, it is the simple fact that Luther's obstinate adherence to his private opinion as to original righteousness drove him, by the mere force of stern logic, to the whole of his abominable system. The stages of this logical necessity are as follows:

Original righteousness was a part of man's nature

Therefore

When man fell, he lost a *part of his nature*.

Therefore

He could not be restored.

Therefore
his salvation could only consist in an "imputed righteousness." The sinner, remaining always a sinner (because he was supposed to have lost part of his nature) passes muster by being covered up by some one else's righteousness, and is, by a sort of legal fiction, accepted as righteous, though really not so.

It will be seen that here we have the *fons et origo* of the glaring deficiencies of Protestantism. It is clear that to the Protestant the forgiveness of sins is the ultimate goal; whereas to the normal Christian it is the starting point.

It is also clear that there is no intelligible ground for a sacramental system in such a religion. Perfection being, on Luther's system, quite out of the question, sanctity sinks to a very low level in modern Protestantism. All that can be done by a sort of intellectual gymnastics, is to lay hold on an "imputed righteousness." Worship, sacraments, and the building of the saintly life through union with the Sacred Humanity, are sealed books to the victim of Lutheranism.

We have but got to look at Protestantism as a whole to see the inevitable result of Luther's obstinate adherence to his own idea about original righteousness. Thus Moehler, like Wilberforce, brought me down to the bed-rock of principle, and one's whole soul revolted *on principle* against the blight of Protestantism. Stripped of its

trappings, it was seen to be a corpse indeed!

I have gone somewhat at length into the influence that these two books exercised upon me in my young days, because each of them brought me, in their respective spheres, to fundamental principles. Now my experience teaches me that it is just the want of fundamental principle that lies at the bottom of our deplorable weakness here in England: and (though this is somewhat anticipating matters) the Broad Church ascendancy of the last years of the nineteenth century, and the action of bishops, clergy and English churchmen generally in the face of the Great War, give one a lamentable spectacle of the want of grasp of fundamental principles, such as Wilberforce and Moehler so clearly set forth. Speaking for myself, I can see in my old age how deeply indebted I am to the writers of these two books for clearing away superincumbent rubbish, and bringing me face to face with plain and solid facts; and I can see that it is to the mental training given me in my young days by these two books that I owe the habit of mind that has enabled me in later years to be of some use.

CHAPTER V

CLERICAL LIFE AT EAST BRENT

I WAS ordained deacon in Wells Cathedral on Trinity Sunday, 1871, and was licensed to the curacy of East Brent. To the best of my recollection it was just before this that my uncle had begun to light the two Altar candles. Almost immediately after my ordination as deacon, my dear uncle fell into a long and very serious illness. He had to engage the services of a priest in consequence, and was himself utterly incapacitated for any work for a long time.

Now there was in the parish a little knot of influential farmers who lived in an outlying hamlet of the parish, who had always to a considerable extent taken the lead in parish doings. I have already mentioned how my Oxford experience had led to such improvements as the sequence of colours, proper Altar linen, etc., etc., the real fact of the matter being that my dear uncle, glad and anxious to improve things by degrees, but never having been in the way of knowing how things should be done, trusted to my Oxford experiences to see that whatever might be done was done right. With

this matter of lighting the Altar candles, I had really nothing to do. It had come from himself altogether. But during his long illness he had made up his mind to go forward in certain other ways. First and foremost, he had resolved to have the daily Eucharist; secondly, to have the sung Eucharist as the principal service every Sunday. Directly he recovered from his illness he put both these resolves into practice: and again, having never had any practical experience, he trusted me to see that what was done should be done in a normal and right way.

Accordingly, boys were trained to serve at the Altar, and were vested in cassock and cotta. Matins and Litany were said without any music. The bell was not rung a second time, but the priest went into the vestry while the Altar candles were lit, and I went to the organ, which, with the singers, was in an old Jacobean organ loft at the West end of the church. The priest, vested merely in surplice and stole, and preceded by his two servers, then went to the Altar, and the sung Mass began; I, if it were my turn to preach, coming down from the organ loft to the pulpit, and returning to the organ after the sermon. There were two branch candlesticks on the re-table, with five lights in each. These were lit by the servers immediately before the Sanctus. My uncle always celebrated quite in an old-fashioned way, and the Ablutions of course were taken after the Blessing, that being, in those days, supposed to

be the only possible place for the Ablutions. At evensong, on Sundays and Festivals, the priest, again accompanied by two servers, said the Office in the Sedilia, the two candles being lit on the Altar. The branch lights were lit during the first lesson, and the priest and servers stood in *medio Altaris* during the Magnificat, which was rather solemnly sung to a single Anglican chant, with organ symphonies interspersed : a somewhat dumb ceremony, but at any rate pointing in the right direction.

Such were the changes made as the result of my uncle's long illness. Now the little knot of influential farmers mentioned above, living in a hamlet at the end of the parish, had fallen under the influence of the rector of the neighbouring parish, who was a Low Churchman of the Church Association type ; and, having been accustomed to take the lead, they thought that they would now be able to rouse the parish to opposition. But they were mistaken in their reckoning : and the result of their opposition was that they made a breach between the two villages, and divided the parish into two camps. These changes of the parish church synchronizing with my ordination to the curacy, the blame was, not unnaturally, laid on me. I feel, as I have said before, that I was a tiresome young person, greatly wanting in tact and patience ; but they had the sympathies of the aforesaid neighbouring rector with them, and local newspapers helped to fan the flame. Meanwhile the bulk of the parish stood by us, and

there was a good deal of spiritual progress made.

A complaint was lodged with the Bishop, who summarily revoked my licence. My uncle lodged an appeal in the Archbishop's Court, and the licence had to be restored, owing to a legal flaw in the Bishop's method of procedure. Thereupon the Bishop refused to ordain me priest, and I was kept a deacon for four years. During this time kind priests from a distance rallied round my uncle and came to help him. Most of these dear kind friends are now dead, but one, I think, still survives ; and I should like to take this opportunity of saying how keenly their generous kindness was appreciated.

After this state of things had gone on for four years, a *rapprochement* was made with the Bishop by a dear kind old friend of mine whose name is well known throughout the country. It was arranged that I should go to another diocese for a year, be ordained there, and, at the end of the year, return to East Brent. Bishop Mackarness of Oxford kindly fell in with this arrangement. I was ordained priest at Cuddesdon, to serve as curate at dear old St. Thomas's, Oxford. Before the year was up, the Bishop of Bath and Wells sent for me to come home again ; and from that moment, up to the day of his death, I experienced the greatest possible kindness from him and his, and I have the tenderest affection for his memory.

Peace was now, to a certain extent, restored in the parish, but the little knot of farmers in the outlying

hamlet still held aloof. They had tried their strength as quondam leaders in the parish, but the parish had this time refused to follow them as leaders. This, naturally, was galling and tended to embitter the strife. A good deal of harm was done by the advent into the aforesaid hamlet of a wealthy farmer who was an Irish "Bible Christian." Under his auspices the flame was fanned, and the little Baptist Chapel at that end of the parish took a new lease of life and became a good deal more important than it had been before. By outside Protestant influence, a "British School" was established at our end of the parish; and, as the Church School of East Brent was notoriously not in connection with the Government, this ultimately became the recognized Government School, the old school being definitely a Church school pure and simple.

Spasmodic attempts were made to keep the opposition going, and on one occasion a member of the opposition was, by careful organization, elected parish churchwarden. He signalized his term of office by ordering the church bells to be rung at the passing of the iniquitous Public Worship Regulation Act; but he had reckoned without his host in trying issues with Archdeacon Denison. The belfry was locked and my uncle had the key. The churchwarden, relying on his right of entry to the church on parish business, ordered the blacksmith to break open the door. When he and his triumphantly

burst in, they found the bell ropes hauled up to the upper loft, and my uncle seated in front of the closed door of the tower staircase. They soon found that they had got themselves into a very awkward mess, for, to begin with, the churchwarden has not got authority as to the ringing of the bells ; and, in the second place, he had committed a grave ecclesiastical offence by breaking open the church door and thereby brought himself under the arm of the Law. So the result was a climb down and apology ! I may mention in passing that the said churchwarden was not long before he found the Church Association rector not Protestant enough for him and joined the Baptists.

As years went on, personal friendly relations were resumed with the knot of opponents, but such of them as were Churchmen had got into the habit of attending the neighbouring church, where they found nothing to vex or distress them, and to the end of my uncle's life they held aloof (though personally friendly) and the regrettable division of the parish continued, as was probably natural under all the circumstances.

I should now like to show something of the effect of all this stir on the spiritual life of the parish. A remark was made by an opponent which all unconsciously revealed a deep spiritual fact. It was objected against us by this good man that we were teaching that our Lord is God ! Exactly so ! The Catholic truth is one solid whole. If one portion of

it has been allowed to sink into the background, it is only a question of time, or of a want of logic, how soon the rest will follow suit: and, all unconsciously, our would-be objector was making this plain. The stir about the Holy Eucharist was emphasizing the truth of our Lord's Divinity: and, *per contra*, the shelving of the Holy Eucharist by long evil practice had obscured, in any practical way, the truth of our Lord's Divinity. It is well that this should be remembered when one hears clergy, who ought to know better, babbling about "primary truths" and "secondary truths."

Another remark was made (this time by a friendly farmer) which again, all unconsciously, illustrated another deep truth. We and our doings were naturally the talk of the local market. Some one at market made some remark to our friendly farmer as to the foolishness of lighting candles in the daytime. Our dear man quaintly answered: "I like it! *it draws attention* to the Communion." Exactly so! He had unconsciously caught the gist of the matter! It was a question of faith expressing itself by works as against "faith without works." In the academic stage of the Catholic Revival, which preceded the Ritual Movement, the tendency had been rather to fight shy of the outward expression of a truth, and to rest content with the academic holding of the said truth. I remember hearing some one say "'that donkey' Bennett! He has got his doctrine, why cannot he be content without his ritual?" The

answer to this question, put in Bible words, would be that it was because faith without works is dead, being alone. The Ritual Movement was the natural and inevitable outcome of the revival of Catholic belief in the Truth of the Blessed Sacrament: and, *per contra*, the surest way of obscuring that truth had been to let go those outward acts by which the truth was manifested. All along the line of the English Catholic Revival the policy of our rulers has been to let the doctrine alone, but to sit upon the inevitable outward expression of that doctrine. You may believe in the Blessed Sacrament, but you shall not show that you believe in it: you may preach Confession, but you shall not have a confessional, etc., etc. And at this moment the same battle for "faith without works" is being shown in the contest as to the Reserved Sacrament and in the attempt to minimize, if not to prevent, the loving Adoration that is the "work" by which "faith" as regards the Blessed Sacrament must be manifested! Our dear old farmer in his ignorance was a wiser man than our clever rulers. "Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength because of Thine enemies: that Thou mayest still the enemy and the avenger."

I would notice next the great increase of Easter Communions that was the outcome of the advance in practice that was made by my uncle after his great illness. He had already been vicar of the parish for twenty-six years when he made the ad-

vance. He was exceedingly popular, and the parish had, up till then, been like a happy family. He had, in 1855, been prosecuted for his sermons on the Objective Reality of the Blessed Sacrament, but so far from this having in any way alienated the affections of the parishoners, they had, on the failure of the case against him, given him the most enthusiastic welcome on his return to the parish ; a welcome in which some of those who were now opposing him had taken their part. Nevertheless, during all those years, the largest number of Easter Communions had been but forty-eight ; while it was quite the exception if the newly confirmed made even their first Communion ! But now, though the parish was divided and there was bitter opposition that had never been there before, it was not long before the Easter Communions numbered 150, a thing hitherto quite unknown within the memory of man ; while it became quite the understood thing that the newly confirmed passed at once to their first Communion. When the Bishop was dealing summarily with me, he said that the congregation had decreased (which was only true as far as the actual members of the opposition went). I answered that the number of Communions had increased, to which he merely replied that it was because this particular thing had been "more pressed" ! "More pressed ?" But had not my uncle, twenty years before, been prosecuted on the very matter of the Blessed Sacrament ? And had he not been preaching and teach-

ing, and urging the duty of Sacramental Communion all along? But it had been to a large extent academic. It had been in its way "faith without works." There had been for some twenty years but a monthly Communion, and that with no external manifestation of the truth that had been so passionately held and taught.

"More pressed" was an exceedingly unfortunate remark for the good Bishop to make. It showed a lamentable ignorance of men and things in general; and it showed a singular ignorance of the people of this particular part of his Diocese. For in that wide far-reaching land that is known as "the Brent Marsh" there was an independent spirit that is much wanting in our up and down country: a spirit that showed itself in the proverbial expression of our neighbourhood: "You can lead Brent folk, but you can't drive them." A dear old friend of mine lived in an up and down country in another part of the county; and when I told him of the Brent proverb, he said: "Oh, I wish they were like that here! You can drive them here, but you can't lead them." But even if the Bishop had been correct in his surmise that the increase of Communions was the result of its having been more pressed, the fact that somehow or another the result had been achieved ought to have been accounted to us for righteousness; whereas the Episcopal response to the result was the revocation of my licence!

A third result of the advance was that people

flocked to East Brent from far and near. One or two houses in the parish were taken by people who came to be near the church for the daily Mass and the Sunday worship. Several people from neighbouring parishes attended East Brent Church regularly: while on Great Festivals the street was like a fair with the number of gigs and carts from a distance, and at Evensong on a Great Festival the church was crammed from end to end, and I have known about forty or fifty people standing outside unable to get in! I often saw people at the sung Mass on a Great Feast who had driven from Glastonbury or Wells, fifteen and seventeen miles respectively; while a dear old friend of mine has told me how she and her friends used to make up a party to come from Cheddar, a distance of nine miles. Long after my uncle's death, an old friend of mine told me that she never expected to see anything quite like East Brent on Easter morning. Now, of course, popularity or unpopularity have nothing to do with the matter: but this flocking again and again to East Brent was rather a strange comment on the assertion, so persistently made, that people did not like it.

Now these three results of the advance made by my uncle all point in the same direction. It was faith, however imperfectly, manifesting itself in action. I make bold to say that what drew people to East Brent was that it manifested the sign of life.

I shall, in the next chapter, have something to say about success and failure at East Brent and about difficulties of country parishes. In summing up the present chapter, I will just note that, in spite of much feebleness in the carrying out, and in spite of my own sloth and manifold shortcomings, the sign of life was there, life manifesting itself, and kindling a response in the souls of the people. Hitherto they had heard of the things of God by the hearing of the ear, and it left them cold: but now, however feebly, it appeared to them that the things of God were still living realities: and it was this that drew people to East Brent in those days.

CHAPTER VI

EAST BRENT (*continued*)

HAVING now stated the facts as regards the partial revival of things Catholic at East Brent, I must attempt the somewht difficult task of reviewing my twenty-five years of clerical experience at East Brent as a whole ; estimating, that is to say, the whole position there, and balancing, to the best of my power, its pros and cons.

The first thing that I shall note, I think, is quite in our favour. There was conspicuous absence of normal " High Churchism." I think I am justified in saying that the normal method of procedure would have been to begin with a surpliced choir (and probably a processional Cross !), to substitute Helmore and plain-song for the old-fashioned Anglican music, and then, cautiously and step by step, to regain its proper position for the Mass. This, as a simple matter of historical fact, had been the method of the movement as a whole, and no doubt it had its advantages, as we shall see later on. To show the Divine Office as what it really is, is *ipso facto*, to pave the way for the recovery of the Mass as *the* Divine Service. But it has two great dis-

advantages, as the experience of the last fifty years shows.

(*a*) It makes an apparent breach with the past, and savours of a new beginning, *in toto*. Now in organic life there are no leaps and bounds, no jerks and new beginnings. To break with the past is to take a hopeless view of our religion as organic life. To proceed by this method seems rather like painting new scenery, and collecting the necessary stage properties, for the production of a new piece. I know of an instance where an old proprietary chapel came into Catholic hands. The whole building was pulled about before starting under the new regime. Galleries were pulled down, monuments torn off the walls, etc., etc.; and the whole place was transmogrified past all recognition. Was this wise? I venture to think it was very unwise. It was practically saying that a new priest was coming to start a new religion! A little more practical experience would have taught people that pews and galleries were not the outcome of Protestantism, but of a general habit of thought through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. So, too, with the old-fashioned music. It is not in the least that Catholics sing plain-song and Protestants sing more flowery music. Every age and generation expressed itself in its own language, and all added something to the sum of the treasures of the Church. Leo XIII attempted to fix Palestrina as the golden age of Church music, and to bow out everything that had

happened since Palestrina: but this attempt cannot be said to have been a success. It did not deserve to be a success, because it was wrong in principle; inasmuch as the eighteenth century had as much right to give of its best to God as had the fifteenth century. Those who have knocked about on the Continent in Catholic countries will have delightful recollections of old-fashioned village churches, with their galleries and pews and flowery music. Anyone, for instance, who knew Ober-Ammergau between forty and fifty years ago will remember the two, or I think three, galleries, one over the other, at the West end of the church, with the organ and village singers in the top gallery of all, where the mixed choir made sweet simple music for the Mass. As a simple matter of fact, the surpliced choir is a thing unknown in Western Catholic Christendom in parish churches. It cannot therefore be necessary to sweep away galleries, pews, mixed choirs, or Anglican music, in order to teach or practise Catholic religion.

Now I think that, as far as it went, the sung Mass at East Brent was quite ideal. The organ stood in the old Jacobean organ loft, the women of the choir sitting on one side of it and the men on the other. The Mass was sung to simple music interspersed with the old hymns that the people knew and loved. With its many and obvious shortcomings it was, as far as it went, quite on all fours with the rest of Western Christendom. Nothing

was torn from the people that they valued and loved. We simply added new treasures to their store. When I first came to North Kensington, a dear old friend, who had to contend with a well worked, but very Anglican, parish, said to me with somewhat of a groan, "Is it possible to teach the Catholic Faith with Anglican music?" I promptly answered, "Of course it is! We have done it at East Brent for the last five-and-twenty years." I am convinced that (with all its obvious and lamentable limitations) the Sunday Mass at East Brent was the ideal thing for the old country parish.

(*b*) Bitter experience has shown me a second grave disadvantage of the surpliced choir method of beginning: and here I should like to say, with all the force at my command, that the chief hindrance to the Catholic revival in England is, not coarse vulgar Protestantism, but that amorphous monstrosity that, in these days, for want of a better word, we call "High Church." Now it seems to me that we have in our past Church history a parallel to this most noxious "ism" in the "mixed multitude" that went up with our fathers out of Egypt, who were always retarding progress: while in the region of art we have its parallel in what the Germans have so happily called "Philistinism." Now what is the matter with the "mixed multitude" in the one case, and with the Philistine in the other? It was that they were crassly unintelligent. They had just wits enough to know that something

unusual was going on: they had *not* wits enough to know what that something was. The mixed multitude and the Philistines, as far as in them lies, rob any movement of which they are the curse and incubus of its *raison d'être*, and drag it down with their senseless vulgarity.

Let me take the surpliced choir and the sequence of colours as an illustration of my meaning. Why, in the early stage of the Catholic movement, had the surpliced choir been introduced into our parish churches? It had been, of course, to familiarize people with the truth as to the Divine Office as emphatically taught and set forth by our Cathedral and Collegiate churches. Then up come the mixed multitude and the Philistines. They see that surpliced choirs seem to be the order of the day. They have just wits enough for that! Perhaps they think it pretty; or perhaps they label this introduction with that truly hateful word "correct." They have not wits enough to perceive the why and wherefore of the matter. So with the sequence of colours. The old fashion of the red Altar cloth was a survival of the Sarum use, in which red was the Sunday colour. Its permanence showed that a Mass on a weekday was a thing not to be contemplated. But if by any chance a Mass should be said on a weekday, why was the Altar to be vested in red? Echo answers why! As the whole point of the surpliced choirs was the truth as to the Divine Office, so the whole point of the sequence

of colours was the daily Mass; but the whole point is just what the mixed multitude and the Philistines do not, and apparently cannot, see. So we have the abomination of surpliced choir in churches where the daily Office is not recited, and the sequence of colours in churches where a daily Mass has never been contemplated. The Philistines have been upon us, and the whole thing has been vulgarized by being robbed of its meaning.

Now the mischief of the apparent necessity for starting with the surpliced choir, and possibly processional Cross, is that in nine cases out of ten it is regarded as an end in itself, having no sort of necessary connection with the Catholic Revival; and that it has landed us in a sort of ritualistic Protestantism which is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. And this quite new and quite unintelligent condition of things is the stock thing of the Church of England of to-day. The old-fashioned Church of England churches had at least a more or less respectable tradition behind them: whereas the surpliced choir and green frontal Protestantism of to-day is quite new, and has no tradition whatever behind it, Catholic or Protestant. It is mere Philistinism.

Now I think I may score it as a point in our favour that we had no High Church tricks at East Brent. What little we were able to do was right as far as it went. I should say that East Brent

exhibited a sanctified common sense that is all too conspicuous by its absence among the High Church Philistines.

But while this was a distinct gain, there was obviously something wanting, though I find it very difficult to say what exactly that something was. One had an instinctive feeling that we were not on the same plane as a typical Church of the Catholic Movement, even though in some particulars we were ahead of it. One felt that many a parish that had not as yet attained to the daily Mass had nevertheless a *tout ensemble* about it, in respect of the Catholic Movement, that East Brent had not. The things that we had got in the Catholic direction were rather of the nature of *purpurei panni* than the outcome of solid Catholic principle. We were, I think, wanting in the discipline of Catholic life. I doubt, for instance, if even such a far-away book as Paget's *Tales of the Village Children* could have been written at East Brent. I am keenly conscious that, as far as concerns myself, this was due to my own fault and want of thoroughness; but this does not wholly account for the want of which I am trying to speak. I think it is largely to be accounted for by the somewhat peculiar position that my dear uncle held in the Catholic Revival, to which I have already alluded. He had, if I may so say, rather started with his personal conviction as to the truth of "the Blessed Sacrament"; whereas the great leaders of the Catholic Revival had started from

the principle of Catholicism, of which the truth of the Blessed Sacrament was an integral part. And this fact will, I think, largely account for a certain want of proportion at East Brent, which rather marked it as being on a somewhat different plane to that of the normal church of the Catholic Revival.

The net result of our long years at East Brent was, I should say, a great improvement in respect of sacramental communion. Had my uncle been succeeded by a Catholic-minded incumbent a splendid work might have been built up on the foundations he had laid; but when, after his death, the daily Mass and the sung Mass on Sundays were both swept away, there was a sense of loss and grievance, but there was not the Catholic instinct that would tell the people why the absence of these things was wrong. Anyone who knows East Brent will know that the incumbency of Archdeacon Denison is looked upon as the golden age of the parish; but we had rather built up a considerable number of devout communicants than formed intelligent Catholics. The glory somewhat departed from East Brent with the passing of Archdeacon Denison. The good results of the new regime were the pulling together of the parish as a whole, and the extinction of old feuds; but now that East Brent has passed into the surpliced choir High Church condition of things, and the choir come in and go out singing a hymn, while daily Mass has disappeared, the older

people, who remember what to them was the golden age, shake their heads and regret the past while they cannot intelligently do this on principle.

It was part of the same lack of proportion that would account for a certain want of appreciation of the duty of fasting communion. It was quite true that on a great Festival the largest number of Communions would be made at seven o'clock. It was also true that we used, on great Festivals, to have some twelve or thirteen communions made at the little chapel in our second village, when the Mass was said an hour before milking, which meant five o'clock at Christmas, four o'clock at Easter, and a quarter to four at Whitsuntide. But there were always dear old-fashioned people communicating in all good faith at the eleven o'clock sung Mass. The problem of general communions in a widely scattered dairy farming parish has still to be solved.

Then again, it is probably this want of proportion that would account for the extreme rarity of sacramental confession at East Brent ; though, no doubt, the prejudice of generations would make progress in this direction very slow in an old country parish. And this fact accentuates the misfortune of the want of continuity to which our parishes are so largely, alas ! accustomed. It wants a generation or two of steady Catholic teaching and practice to leave any very appreciable mark ; whereas it too often happens that the Catholic-minded incumbent of to-day is

succeeded to-morrow by a priest of quite a different calibre.

In thinking of the special difficulties of a scattered country parish with outlying hamlets (such as the hamlet of Rooksbridge in the parish of East Brent) I should like to mention an idea that occurred to me about half-way through my curate life at East Brent in connection with this great problem.

I was much struck at this time by reading Lady Herbert's *Life of S. John Baptist de' Rossi* with the account of his work in the scattered hamlets of the Campagna. He formed a little band of missioners who would go and plant themselves in one of these hamlets for a month. During that time they instructed the people, prepared them for the Sacraments, heard their confessions, and gave them Communion. They then moved on to another hamlet, promising to return in three months' time and see how they were getting on. Meanwhile some one would be appointed as a sort of class leader, who would assemble the people on Sundays and conduct some sort of devotions. It seemed to me that some itinerant mission of this kind might solve a good many problems in these widely scattered parishes, and might be of immense help to the vicars of such parishes in their very difficult work; but alas! it soon became apparent, on thinking the matter over, that our unhappy divisions stand in the way of any such attempt. Such an itinerant mission presupposes unanimity among the incumbents of the

various parishes ; for the incumbent who has views would not welcome the missioner who had no views. But I think that if two or three like-minded incumbents were to combine to welcome such an itinerant mission much might be done. But, alas, Catholic incumbents who have no views are few and far between in our country parishes. But I think that S. John Baptist de' Rossi and his work may well be borne in mind in trying to face the difficult problems of our scattered country parishes.

One word as to my own life before I leave the subject of East Brent. I was for twenty-five years Curate of East Brent, and had lived there for ten years before my Ordination. Men of my own age and standing, or even considerably junior to me, had been in and out of Curacies. Incumbencies, Canonries or Deaneries, and had in some cases reached the Episcopate, while I was still in my first Curacy : and I think that, for me, this long sojourn in one place has had its great advantages. I know that it is the fashion to say that men get stale and get into ruts and grooves ; and one of the propositions of eager would-be reformers is that every one shall be hunted out and moved on after ten years. I profoundly mistrust " reforms," and I fight very shy of " reformers," so that I may be a prejudiced person : but I do think that these eager and fussy gentlemen have, in their anxiety to pull us out of grooves, a little omitted to weigh, as against the said grooves, the advantage of a long

quiet sojourn in one place. I believe that my thirty-five years at East Brent was of great advantage to me in enabling me to develop slowly: and, *pace* the reformers, I do account it a singular blessing that my forty-seven years of parochial work should have been spent in two parishes, I having been for twenty-five years Curate of East Brent, and for twenty-two years Vicar of S. Michael, N. Kensington: so that, in finally leaving S. Michael's at the age of seventy, I was only leaving my second home since I was thirteen!

My dear uncle died, at the age of ninety-one, on S. Benedict Day, 1896, having been Vicar of East Brent for fifty-one years. The daily Mass, and the sung Mass on Sundays, had gone on for twenty-five years at the time of his death. Shortly after his death I was made Prebendary of Yatton in Wells Cathedral, and shortly after that I was offered the Incumbency of S. Michael, North Kensington. I like to remember that it was by an apparent accident that I came to S. Michael at all. I had been sounded as to the post of Chaplain to S. Michael's Home at Axbridge. I had made up my mind to accept it, and was told that I should receive a letter from the patron in a day or so. Three days passed, and no letter came. On the fourth day I received from a friend the offer of S. Michael's, North Kensington (a place that I had never heard of!) and on the fifth day came the formal offer of the Chaplaincy at Axbridge. Had this letter not been delayed I

should not have been free to accept S. Michael's: equally I could not have accepted S. Michael's, North Kensington, had the offer of it come a day or so later. These apparent accidents made me feel very sure that it was S. Michael's to which I was called: and feeling that, as I did, I could not but be thankful that matters had been determined and settled for me in the Providence of God.

It is with considerable reluctance that I add to the end of this chapter what I am now going to say, for I feel that here I am on very sacred ground. But I could not give a just account of my ecclesiastical life if I omitted all mention of my dear aunt, Mrs. George Denison. My home had been with my uncle and her from the time I was thirteen till I was forty-eight; and after my uncle's death, bound together as we were, she came to make my new home for me and, by so doing, alone made it possible for me to live at S. Michael's by quietly putting her all at my disposal. No one will ever know how my dear uncle, in his long life of contending for the Church, was helped and supported all along by her gentle wisdom. And no one can ever know what, for the forty-seven years that we lived together, she had been to me. It was she who in my boyish days first opened my eyes to the Catholic vision; and to the end of her long life she retained the priceless gift of a young heart, to which one could always turn for cheer and encouragement. I never knew anyone who kept so young a heart. I have

a vision of her at the age of eighty-seven, on our last visit to Rome, going up the Scala Santa on her knees, helping herself with her hands, and hearing Mass in the chapel at the top of the stairs.

She died at S. Michael's Vicarage in 1908, leaving sweet memories behind her there. No words can say what she was to me in the forty-seven years during which I had the privilege of living with her in the closest companionship; but I feel as if I should be rather sailing under false colours if I were to attempt to account for my ecclesiastical life without making mention of this beloved personality.

CHAPTER VII

S. MICHAEL'S, NORTH KENSINGTON

I FOUND myself at S. Michael's in a somewhat unique position. Owing to a peculiar combination of circumstances, into which I need not enter here, I was the sixth Vicar of that rather unfortunate parish in eleven years! This really, as I soon found, gave me a great vantage ground: and the subsequent development of S. Michael's under my regime was largely attributable to this particular circumstance. Many good Church-people had taken themselves elsewhere, while those who remained were so weary of the incessant changes that they were tacitly prepared to give a free hand to any priest who would come and stay, and be sociable and friendly: so that I soon found that I might steal a horse where some of my neighbours might not even look over a hedge.

I found on my arrival at S. Michael's a High Altar, with Cross and six lights, with a square ritual Choir in front of it enclosed by a very beautiful alabaster wall, a side chapel with its own Altar, with a fine reredos of Jacobean woodwork; the Eucharistic vestments in use; and, best of all, plain Matins

and Litany at 10.30, with Missa Cantata and Sermon at 11. Coming, as I did, from East Brent with its many obvious limitations, I felt myself, as it were, in the seventh heaven, and wondered what I had done to deserve so good a fortune.

The result of all this (with the peculiar circumstances above mentioned) was that, at my first Michaelmas, we just added the things that were wanting, viz., the High Mass and Solemn Evensong, which became the rule at S. Michael's from that day.

I should like to make three remarks.

(*a*) Bits and scraps of Catholic ritual tend to unsettle people's minds. In the first place, they disgust Catholics and Protestants equally and leave every one discontented: in the second place, they keep timid minds in the perpetual fidget as to what is coming next. But Catholic ritual pure and simple, with no *arrière pensée* or High Church tricks, overawes and impresses people at once. I should like to give two instances in the earlier days of S. Michael's as an illustration of this fact. A dear old friend, long since dead, had not liked the introduction of the vestments; but when the whole thing was consistently carried out she said, "Now it is all so beautiful and orderly that there is nothing to disturb one's thoughts." Another dear old lady, a connection of mine, came one day to High Mass (which was, I expect, quite a new experience for her). Her remark was, "What a beautiful service,"

and she then told me that now, for the first time, she understood what was meant by "non-communicating attendance."

(*b*) In our struggle to regain the ordinary decencies of Christian worship, of which we have so long been robbed, we should make it plain that we are on *Catholic ground*. Take, for instance, the use of incense. Of course, as a simple matter of fact, the abnormal and extraordinary Christians are those who do not use incense in Divine Service: but the fact of our having had for so long a time to put up with the absence of the ordinary decencies of Christian worship tends to make us timid and almost, as it were, apologetic in our attempts to recover them. I was, as I have already pointed out, in a singularly favourable position at S. Michael's; and I never said a word as to my intention of having High Mass, or made any sort of explanation or apologies about it; nor was anything said to me. I venture to think that it is a mistake for priests to beat about the bush and enter into elaborate discussions and explanations about this, that, or the other if, on maturely considering the particular circumstances of their particular parish, they judge that the time is ripe for an advance. If in a particular parish a change is not expedient at the moment, then let them not make it; but whatever they are able to do in the direction of Catholic ritual, be it little or much, let them do it and not talk about it. I always took

this line at S. Michael's, with a happy result. It being apparent to me that the High Mass and Solemn Evensong could be restored at once, I said nothing, but restored them. If any questions are asked, I should always try to answer them *on the Catholic ground*. If, for instance, I were asked why I cense the Altar in that particular way, I should say, "I do not know, and I do not care! It is how our fellow-Christians always do it: and that is quite enough for me." But then, we must be quite sure that we *have* the Catholic reason for anything that we may do, or not do. There must be no "High Church" tricks or (as dear Fr. Stanton used to call them) "inventions of man" in our rendering of Divine Service. And this leads me to my third consideration.

(*c*) How much trouble people would save themselves if they would remember the fundamental principle that in the case of any innovation, *the burden of proof lies with the innovator*. It is not for us to prove that he is wrong—but for him to prove that he is right. Now, "High Church" tricks are all innovations. It is for those that use them to *prove* that they are right in so doing. Take, for instance, a priest's manner of celebrating Mass. He may, or he may not, be able to have Eucharistic vestments; but there is nothing whatever to hinder him from celebrating in the right way. There is no excuse whatever for his inventing a *quasi rituale* of his own: and if he has a "use" of his own he

is bound to prove that it is right. Far better that a priest should celebrate in surplice and stole, and celebrate the right way, than that he should don the Eucharistic vestments and be flopping about on his knees or crouching, as so many do, with the result that, in Gothic vestments, they look for all the world like a beetle stuck on a pin! Do let us look to it that whatever we do is done in the right way; and if anyone produces a "use" of his own, or of some group of his fellow Churchmen, let us be quite sure that in all such innovations the onus lies upon the innovator of proving that they are right.

And as with what we do, so with what we omit to do. It is a great satisfaction to me to reflect that, during the whole twenty-two years of my incumbency of S. Michael's, we never once were guilty of a "Harvest Festival." Nor did we ever, during all those years, follow the modern fashion of the "Three Hours" Devotions on Good Friday. I think I may say that we stuck rigidly to Catholic principle: and I take it as a great compliment that it should have been remarked by a friend that S. Michael's was the best church in Kensington because "there was no nonsense there."

I cannot refrain at this point from placing on record the enormous debt of gratitude that I owed in the earlier years at S. Michael's to my dear friend Mr. John Hugh Thomson, our invaluable *cæremoniarius*, who took care that whatever was done should be done in the right way, and supplemented

my deficient knowledge with his accurate information. And I should also like to say how immensely I have at various times been indebted in a similar way to my dear fellow-priests, who have so often helped me, by their more accurate knowledge and excellent advice, to carry out in detail the broad principle on which I was determined at all hazards invariably to act.

I must apologize for this long digression: but my excuse is that it is the rigid adherence to the principles that I have tried to lay down in the foregoing considerations that largely accounts for the influence that S. Michael's, North Kensington, has exercised during the past twenty-two years.

Before I leave the subject of our Catholic ritual I should like to append one remark, viz., that no one thinks less, or troubles their head less, about Catholic ritual than those who have it in its entirety. There are many churches where High Mass and Solemn Evensong are occasional functions, relegated to great Festivals or special occasions, with the result that there is a certain "amateurishness" about it; and one feels that the devotions of the Sacred Ministers must be rather impaired by a certain nervousness as to whether they are "doing it right." But when, as with us, High Mass and Solemn Evensong form the regular Sunday worship, one simply does not think about it at all. As my dear old friend said, "there is nothing to disturb one's thoughts."

I remember, a good many years ago, an acquaintance of mine coming to see me in rather an excited condition. He was one who had gone over to Rome, and was very excited over what our Archbishop had said about something or other. What was I going to do about it? I said that I had not seen it, and knew nothing about it. Had I not read what the Archbishop had said? No! I had not heard anything about it! Thereupon I laughed, and said, "Look here! you Romans, and the Protestants, trouble your heads about Anglican ritual a great deal more than we do. We don't think about it."

It is so! If people would make a bonfire of their "uses" and "ideas" and betake themselves to the Catholic religion, in all its amazing simplicity, and be rigidly Catholic instead of being "High," they would find that they were beginning to "enter into their rest."

I think, at this point, I may say something about (*a*) late Communions and (*b*) Confessions.

(*a*) When first I came to S. Michael's there were a certain number of dear old-fashioned people who, in all good faith, communicated regularly at the High Mass. What was to be done? It seemed to me that the one thing to do was to leave them alone in all good faith. I put up a notice at the door to the effect that *strangers* could not be communicated at the eleven o'clock Mass unless they had sent in their names at least some time during the week

before. But this, of course, did not apply to parishioners. I never opened my lips in the pulpit about Fasting Communion: and the fact stood me in good stead later on. The late Communions quietly dwindled away as time went on, a fact which rather troubled a dear old good friend of a more or less Protestant frame of mind. I pointed out to him that the church was full, and that it was no business of mine to go about and ask if people were going to communicate or not; and I was able to say, "*You bear me witness that I have never said anything about it.*" He quite admitted this, but thought that I did not "make them welcome." My answer was that parishioners who presented themselves were always communicated, and that I knew no other way of making them welcome. In passing, I should like to record my emphatic protest against the utterly unworthy practice of "faking up" three communicants for High Mass. This seems to me as irreverent as it is absurd.

The result of the policy that I had pursued was that in a very short time late Communions had practically ceased, and that without any contentions or heartburnings. Of course, as I have pointed out more than once, the circumstances at S. Michael's were singularly favourable; but I venture to commend this way of dealing with the matter to the consideration of my brethren who may find themselves confronted with a similar difficulty.

(*b*) When first I came to S. Michael's, two ladies

were commended to me as being in the habit of making their Confessions. I at once arranged Confessionals in the church, and was careful always to be there at fixed hours, of which notice was given on the notice boards. The Confessional at S. Michael's speedily became a fact for that part of the world. In my young days, to make one's Confession involved all the fuss of making an appointment, etc: and where Confessions were heard at regular times it was, all too often, in the vestry, with the result that one did not know which priest to expect to find. S. Alban's, Holborn, stood out as the place where each priest had his own Confessional in the open church: and a great refuge one had found it. Now, thank God, the hearing of Confessions is a quite simple part of the week's programme in hundreds of churches, and the Sacrament of Penance is freely recognized as a part of our Christian inheritance.

Shortly after my arrival the Blessed Sacrament was permanently reserved in a little chapel off the church. All through my ministry at East Brent I had been in the habit of carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick from the Mass. This, of course, was all right for chronic or ordinary cases of sickness, but did not provide for sudden emergencies. I can remember two occasions, and two only, during the forty-three years of my priesthood on which I had to celebrate for the sick. Nothing but perpetual Reservation can ever meet all cases.

When I began to reserve at S. Michael's, it was the sick and dying that I had in my mind. In later years, as I shall show in the next chapter, we learnt to repudiate the stock expression of Reservation for the sick and dying. But in those far-away days this had not dawned upon me.

I am not going to trouble my readers with any detailed history of our doings at S. Michael's. My purpose in this book is rather to sketch the influence of various circumstances on my own ecclesiastical developments, and I shall best do this by recording, in my next chapter, various impressions that were made upon me by my London experience. But before I pass to these, I will just mention two things that seem to me to be called for here, viz., (*a*) improvements in the outward aspect of the church itself; and (*b*) troubles with the ecclesiastical authorities.

In the first days of S. Michael's the organ and singers had been in the West gallery; and the music was the great feature of the church. The second incumbent, being anxious to improve things from the ecclesiastical point of view, had, not unnaturally for the time, begun with "the surpliced choir," as to so many, perhaps, unthinking people seemed the way to begin. So the ritual choir had been erected, and the organ brought down from the gallery and put in an apse at the side, where it was unsightly and blocked what is now the Chapel of S. Joseph. I should much have preferred the old arrangement,

but "High Church" sentiment had prevailed. I had no intention of making any alteration, though the organ was unsightly and the "surpliced choir" terribly cramped the sanctuary. But (fortunately, in one way of speaking) after some years the floor of the church began to give way, with the result that organ, ritual choir, etc., had all to be pulled down, while navvies were turned in to make a rubble and concrete foundation for a new wood and block floor. This was our opportunity. The organ and singers were relegated back to the gallery; the alabaster wall of the ritual choir was altered so as to make the present most dignified and spacious sanctuary; and the side apse, which had been blocked by the organ, was made the present beautiful Chapel of S. Joseph. Many gifts have been given to the church at various times, e.g. vestments, candlesticks, lamps, pictures, and images, and, last and best of all, the present beautiful baroque Altar-piece, which fell into our fortunate possession in the early days of the war. But it was owing to the giving way of the floor that the main features of S. Michael's became what they are to-day.

Now for the less pleasant topic of troubles with the authorities. Our troubles at S. Michael's came not from within, but from without. During the episcopate of Bishop Creighton came a point of departure that was a new one to us, viz., that the Bishop made a personal request, on grounds of expediency, as regards the incense. This, as I have

said, was quite a new aspect of affairs. Had the Bishop, as in former days, issued orders that were based on the assumption that Privy Council judgments were the laws of the Church, he would have been met, of course, by the same flat refusal as all along the line up to that time. But here the Privy Council judgments were being quite disregarded, the Bishop was making a pointedly personal request on grounds of temporary expediency. This was something quite different to anything that we had hitherto experienced, and seemed to amount to a tacit admission of the utter hopelessness of Privy Council judgment and P.W.R. Court. We were therefore prepared to meet the Bishop on this ground. We had not the slightest intention of playing tricks with High Mass, where incense is *de rigueur*. But we might, for the time being, go back to Missa Cantata, at which incense is merely permissible : and it was markedly a matter of personal request only. There was no absolute obligation on Catholic grounds for High Mass and Solemn Evensong ; and the Missa Cantata was absolutely right without incense. So we met the Bishop's request in this way. But, while it was very satisfactory to be able without any sacrifice of principle to accede to a personal request from our Diocesan, it was very disastrous to S. Michael's. The collection dropped from £7 a week to £4. The then churchwarden, who was of a sanguine temperament, thought that people who had kept away because

of the incense would now come to the church. I told him that I should be very glad if it were so, but that I did not in the least expect it. And the event proved that I was right and he was wrong; for, while not a single person came to the church in consequence of the disuse of the incense, many betook themselves elsewhere, with the financial result above mentioned. I used laughingly to say that I should have to go to the Bishop and say that while I was very glad to have been able to accede to his personal request, I really could not afford to do so any longer unless I were subsidized. For, as a simple matter of fact, we were paying in hard money some £150 a year for something that we all hated! This "trouble" was at any rate a friendly trouble, inasmuch as we were not in any way in conflict with the authorities.

But Bishop Creighton's lamented early death put an end to his strictly personal request, and after his death we reverted at once to the High Mass and Solemn Evensong: it being perfectly evident that his well-meant request had not been in any way a success, but, on the contrary, had merely entailed upon us serious financial loss.

By this time we had learnt experience; and were rather, as regards personal requests, in the position of the burnt child that fears the fire: so that we should not have again found ourselves able to accede to any similar personal request that Bishop Creighton's successor might make. But the new

Bishop adopted a somewhat different line from that of Bishop Creighton, in that he attempted to set on foot a "London use" of incense, whereby he was cutting clean across the Act of Uniformity, by which he was as much bound as anyone else. The strange *modus operandi* at this time was as follows: if anyone accepted the "London use," well and good; if one declined to accept it one was offered the normal Christian use of incense on great Festivals! This had an element of great absurdity about it, for if Christian use of incense was right, why restrict it? But if it were wrong, it seems a curious way of celebrating a great Festival to give a man licence to sin on that day because it was a Festival! And this extraordinary state of affairs was to be enforced by pains and penalties, so that any parish that had High Mass more than fifteen times in the year was to be boycotted!! The "boycott" meant that curates could not be licensed and Confirmation could not be administered in the said parish! This was a wholly different state of things from Bishop Creighton's personal request, even supposing that we were willing to accede a second time to the "personal request," which we certainly were not prepared to do. This amounted to a declaration of war; and the result was that S. Michael's was now under Episcopal boycott for nine years! After nine years the boycott was suddenly removed without any action on my part. The Bishop had found that his position was illogical

and untenable, as we had all along known that it was: but we had been made to suffer for the want of logic on the Bishop's part.

A second demand was made upon me by Bishop Creighton's successor, compliance with which was quite impossible; viz., that I should lock the door of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, and so debar the faithful from paying their devotions there! But, after a while, the matter was compromised (without any action on my part) by a proposal being made to me from the Bishop of an open grille which should be kept locked. The dear kind friend who, all unknown to me, had negotiated this arrangement with the Bishop had, in his goodness, made himself responsible for the said grille. The result was, of course, that the Reserved Sacrament was much more in evidence than it had ever been before!

Going back to Bishop Creighton's days, I must mention that I had to suffer a severe loss by the sudden withdrawal of the Diocesan Home Mission from the Mission District of S. Martin's. This meant the loss of £200 a year, and was directly in the teeth of the Bishop, who had informed the society that I had placed the matter of the Mission Chapel unreservedly in his hands, and that he recommended the continuance of the grant. But this pre-eminently Diocesan Society snapped their fingers in the Bishop's face by saying that they declined to reconsider their decision!! However, the Blessed

Angels came to our aid at this juncture, and, at the suggestion of Bishop Creighton, our kind and generous patron, Prebendary Hellier, produced out of a capital sum that he had been accumulating for the said Mission District an endowment of £150 a year for the stipend of the Mission Priest. This made life possible for us: but it was a cruel blow to my dear friend Mr. Bridge, the excellent Mission Priest, inasmuch as it robbed him of his more or less independent position as Priest-in-Charge with a stipend of £200, and reduced him to the level of one of my curates with a stipend of £150. It speaks volumes for his love of the Mission and for his personal goodness to me that he was willing to fall in with this arrangement.

I will now bring this somewhat lengthy chapter to a close, and pass on to the consideration of the varied impressions made upon me by London experience.

CHAPTER VIII

S. MICHAEL'S, NORTH KENSINGTON, IMPRESSIONS

IN coming to S. Michael's I was entering upon two new experiences. In the first place, I was now, for the first time, the responsible parish priest; and then I had to exercise this new responsibility under the, to me, entirely new experience of a London parish.

Now, I think that there are quite two sides to the question as to whether it is admissible for a man to come, as I did, straight from a country to a London parish. There are those who may say that for a London parish a man ought to have been through the technical London training. But I am inclined to wonder whether sometimes this technical town training may not lead, *mutatis mutandis*, to the same sort of cramping tendency that we are apt to find fault with in the seminary priest. The "highly trained" London priests occasionally seem as if they had been all run out of one mould; and one has a sort of feeling that one will pretty well know, before they open their mouths, what they will say on any given subject.

And another danger of over-organization is that the machinery obtrudes itself rather too much, and the human element tends to retire too much into the background. It is somewhat like the difference between machine and hand work. On the other hand, the untrained man has to form his experience, and probably learn by mistakes. But wherever the balance of advantage may be, I had to face my London parish without technical town training, and personally I am glad that it so happened.

I found out at once that the jog-trot axiomatic method of " house-to-house visitation " is absolutely out of the question for a London vicar. In the first place, an immense proportion of his time has to be taken up by business letters and correspondence of all sorts ; and the general oversight of things, financial and otherwise, and the oiling of the machine, cuts up another large part of the available time. I remember a well-known London vicar saying to me in my country days, " My work is to pull the strings " ; and I soon found out the truth of this maxim.

But even if time allowed of house-to-house visitation, the London parish, in my experience, would certainly not admit of it. Supposing that, by some superhuman effort, it had been possible to visit 843 houses, with three or four families in by far the greater number of them, *cui bono ?* One would have wasted two or three months in

saying "How do you do" and putting down names, to find on a second arduous peregrination that an immense number had left the parish in the meantime, and one would simply have wasted an enormous amount of valuable time; whereas, even if that were not so, the large majority of the people do not in the least want to see the clergy; which fact is not surprising when we reflect that 87 per cent. of the population of London have been ascertained to consist of those who pay no outward attention to any form of religion at all! It became clear to me that the one thing to do was to reverse the axiomatic process and work from the church outwards, devoting one's chief energies to keeping things very warm at the heart, in the hope that the warmth would radiate outwards. Before leaving the subject of "house-to-house visitation," I should like to say that long before I went to London I had had my doubts as to the advisability of that incessant visiting that is supposed to be *de rigueur*, and that forms the great burden of the country parish. I remember once, at a rural deanery meeting in the West country, a dear old vicar enunciating the sentiment that a house-going parson makes a church-going people, whereupon a shrewd and clever elderly priest remarked that he had often had occasion to quote that saying in order to refute it! I am quite sure that "house-to-house visitation" has, whether in country or town, its cons as well as its pros: but, however

that may be, in London it is a case of *d'abord c'est impossible.*

The next thing that impressed me in London is the total absence (at any rate in new districts such as S. Michael's) of the parochial spirit. Churches are close together; people do not probably know in what parish they are actually living; and those who go to church at all will go to the church that they like best. London is quite "congregational," and this is frankly recognized by London vicars in general. And this fact additionally emphasizes the importance in London of what goes on *inside* the church as compared with what goes on outside it: and I was confirmed in my impression that one's best energies should be devoted to the building up of the spiritual lives of those who were already worshipping in the church. To put it in other words, if, in a parish like S. Michael's, a choice has perforce to be made between the missionary and the pastoral work of the church, I should decide for the pastoral rather than the missionary work. If, with an inadequate staff, one tries to sit between the two stools and do something in both directions, it is sure to end in doing next to nothing in either one.

I should like next to say that it has to be borne in upon one by experience that there are no "short cuts" in the work of the Church. But it was perhaps inevitable that, in early days, one should wish to try some short cut towards improvement.

Very early on we made preparation for a parochial mission, which, after due preparation, was held by Fathers Bull and Maxwell of the Cowley Fathers. That very wise person, Bishop Creighton, told me that the almost invariable experience of the parochial Mission was that, while it immensely raised the spiritual level of those who regularly worshipped in the church, it did comparatively little in the way of bringing in outsiders. In a word, its action was more pastoral than missionary. So exactly it proved in this case. We owe more than we can say to the fortnight's Mission in the way of raising the spiritual tone of our people, but of visible result as regards outsiders there was little or nothing to chronicle. The church was filled through the Mission; but the tangible results were with those who regularly worshipped at S. Michael's. One must not trust to a Mission as a "short cut" to the evangelization of a parish.

But if the Parochial Mission cannot be a short cut, much less can all those things that go by the name of "social work" effect anything in the missionary direction. There are priests, no doubt, whose special gifts lie in the missionary direction, who may be able to turn clubs to a good purpose, but my experience in this direction may be written down as mere waste of much time and energy, with a considerable financial loss. I gained, in my first years, a certain notoriety in respect of a men's club that was run on the common-sense

ground of trusting men, and not treating them as children. As dear Father Stanton would have put it, we had "beer and spirits for the body and cards for the mind." Socially it was quite successful; financially it required a much larger membership than was possible in that neighbourhood, which was in close proximity to the Cobden Club.* But as a handmaid to Religion!! We were all very friendly and "hail fellow well met," but that was the beginning, middle, and end of it! There are no short cuts: and if a priest is inclined to think that one can begin with a billiard-table and end in the Sacraments, my own impression is that he will find himself vastly mistaken. Clubs may be all very well for men and lads, and young women and girls, who are worshipping in the church, though even here I think their value is enormously overrated; and my personal experience is that, on the whole, they are more bother than they are worth. They lead to constant jars and heart-burnings, and I have often been driven to say that there was more trouble over these wretched amusements than over the whole spiritual work of the parish put together.

I shall probably be cutting across popular prejudice when I inveigh against the "Mothers' Meeting" *as a vehicle for any* religious instruction. My experience makes me class the Mothers' Meeting with the rest of "social work" as being a much

* A well-known working man's club in N. Kensington.

overrated institution. By all means let kind ladies give the poor hard-worked mothers an opportunity of a pleasant afternoon for chat and recreation once a week: and, *emphatically* by all means, let them have a real jolly day's summer outing. Some of my happiest recollections are of Mothers' outings at Southend. But do not let the parish priest think that the Mothers' Meeting is going to be an ante-chamber to the church; for experience shows that it is nothing of the sort!

Side by side with clubs and Mothers' Meetings I should like to put Men's Bible classes as a dismal failure. I mean by this "Bible classes" for men who do not as yet go to church. If you *start* with the Sunday worship and the use of the Sacrament a well conducted Bible class will do immense good. But if you aim at *beginning* with a Bible class it is quite another matter. There is not the slightest difficulty in gathering men together to a "Bible class": but there it begins and ends. And this sort of Bible class I consider a distinct hindrance to the spread of the Gospel, inasmuch as it leads men to think that "Bible class" is religion!

No! There are no short cuts! And if I were beginning again, with the experience that I have accumulated, I should not bother my head much about clubs, Mothers' Meetings, or Bible classes. I am inclined also to think that the *omnium gatherum* Sunday school is open to the same objection as the Mothers' Meeting or the Men's Bible class.

A good Sunday school or Catechism for the children who go to church is quite one thing. It is, of course, at best somewhat of a makeshift, devised to do the work that ought to be done by parents and godparents: but, *if it starts from the right end*, it must do much good. But what generally happens in the Sunday school is that the parents are glad to get the children out of the way, and to know they will not be messing their Sunday clothes, and therefore turn them out to find some Sunday school. Any one will do; let the child choose its own. It may be Catholic or it may be fire worshippers. It does not in the least matter, if only the children get out of the way! And they will get a summer outing and a winter treat, or two or three, if they play their cards well and the Sunday school authorities are sufficiently green. But the real mischief of the Sunday school is that it is supposed to do duty for Religion! As for what is taught in the average Sunday school!!! all one can say is that in a vast majority of cases the Catechism, which is the one thing that they have got to learn, is the very last thing in the world that is commonly taught them! No! There is a *very* seamy side to Sunday school!

I found that a Saturday Catechism followed by a children's Mass was really a good thing and well worth taking trouble about: and a well-considered Sunday school or Catechism, such as my dear fellow priests would carry on, might obviate some of the

evils that must always arise when "Sunday school" is considered to be synonymous with "Religion." But I am afraid that the average "Sunday school" is a fruitful source of disappointment if in any way it is looked upon as a "short cut."

Nor have I much faith in the "Confirmation class." This again is a mere makeshift. The Church supposes that, either by parents or godparents, or by Sunday school and Catechism, the children have been taught the Catechism from their earliest years, and been brought up to lead godly and Christian lives. But to suppose that any amount of "Confirmation class" is going to do instead of this, or that we are to make theologians of the unfortunate children in six weeks is, in my judgment, to lean on that very broken reed that I have called a "short cut." There are *no* short cuts.

At this point I should like to say that I am fully conscious in all that I have said of my own miserable failures and shortcomings as a parish priest. No doubt, a really competent parish priest would have been able to do something in the more distinctly missionary direction. But the fact remains that the staff of clergy attached to one large London parish is absolutely and wholly inadequate to the work that has to be done: and therefore, perforce, a selection of work has to be made; and, with all my faults and shortcomings clearly before me, I still deliberately say that, where much work must

of necessity be left undone, it is the pastoral work that ought to come first. The consideration of the utter discrepancy between the work that has to be done and the number of workers available leads me to another impression made upon me by London.

The apparent hopelessness of coping with a great London parish as a whole under the existing circumstances of a totally inadequate staff leads, in London, to the taking up by one and another priest, according to his own particular gift, of non-parochial work where a chance arises for exercising wider influence; and this, while often productive of excellent and far-reaching effects, is somewhat regrettable from the directly parochial point of view. At the same time, it probably helps priests to bear up under the somewhat depressing fact of being obviously unable to cope with their own parish as a whole. As an instance of what I mean, I would mention Father Stanton's well-known work among London postmen. I know of another London priest who has made a speciality of work among prisons and prisoners; while another dear friend of mine devotes himself largely to the training (in the highest and best sense of the word) of lads for the Navy. It is, of course, not the ideal thing that parish priests should engage themselves in non-parochial work: but one cannot but feel that it is well that they should, to a certain extent, be doing these things, and that they are probably obeying a call in so doing. But of course

it calls for watchfulness, lest it should degenerate into the mere following of a hobby.

I must myself plead guilty to the taking up of non-parochial work at various times. I may say, with all diffidence, that I have a certain aptitude for teaching elementary Christian truths in a popular way, and this has led me to non-parochial work in two directions. About midway in my long London incumbency I undertook, in response to a cry for help, two or three series of popular lectures to business men and women at St. Sepulchre's, Holborn: while of late years I have tried to exercise a wider influence by writing books. From the parochial point of view this was, as I have said above, somewhat regrettable: but from the point of view of the hopelessness of dealing with a London parish as a whole it has its excuses: and, in the light of the event, I cannot feel that it was unjustifiable. I was drawn into the path that so many other London clergy have found themselves almost forced to take. As to lesser matters, which may quite fairly be called "hobbies," my impression is that a hobby is a very valuable asset to a London priest: and I venture to think that a good hobby will often stave off a breakdown; while, short of that, it keeps the mind fresh and invigorated. A London priest once said to Bishop Temple that he had not had a holiday for so many years. The wise Bishop simply remarked, "Very bad for the parish!"

I now pass to more pleasing impressions. London is a great revelation to a country priest. One had always been told that the Catholic Movement was essentially a lay movement. We had meekly accepted this dictum as an axiom; but we had never found it so in the country. On the contrary, it was we who had always had to do all the shoving. But when I came to London I found the truth of the axiom. It is the laity who do the shoving in London, and they push us along and cheer us along in the most delightful way. To begin with, what an unwonted luxury it was to find everything connected with the Church Services put ready to one's hand by the kind heads of various departments. I had not to worry my head about acolytes and the service of the sanctuary. All was arranged by the kind *ceremoniarius*. I had not got to trouble at all as to what music was going to be sung. This was all splendidly arranged by the dear kind organist and choirmaster. I had simply to walk into the sacristy and vest for the Altar. No worries or having to look round. Nothing to disturb one's mind or thoughts. Whether it were an ordinary Sunday morning or the great splendid function of Palm Sunday, it was all the same. The kind and enthusiastic lay workers were seeing to everything! And, later on, I have the tenderest recollections of the unwearied and skilful labours of the Finance Committee and the Relief Committee: and I can only blame my own stupidity for not

having called the Committees into being long before I did. So, too, with the invaluable work of the ladies. One lady after another would take entire charge of the sacristy work: a Ladies' Committee would undertake to finance the Church Institute; and the patient drudgery of Sunday school was carried on year in year out, etc. Oh, yes! The London Catholic laity indeed do the shoving: and after all the shoving that I had had to do in the country, it was indeed a luxury to find myself in the wholesome atmosphere of a London Catholic parish. I am more indebted than words can convey to all the dear workers at S. Michael's, and to the wise and skilful heads of departments who directed all their loving energy.

Here I should like to make a remark. The readiness of the Catholic laity to do the shoving sometimes meets with a chilling snub at the hands of certain excellent priests, who think it a merit to keep everything in their own hands. I, being naturally of a very lazy temperament, was more than content to adopt the comfortable principle of never doing anything myself that I could possibly get anyone else to do for me. But this was part of my lazy ways. But, quite apart from this, I think it a very grave mistake for the parish priest to keep everything in his own hands. The ultimate responsibility is, of course, his and his alone. It is quite wrong for him to shirk this responsibility, as some do who consult the congregation as to

matters they ought to decide for themselves. There are priests who practically throw themselves down before the congregation and ask to be trampled on. This is as wrong as it is contemptible. But the priest who " keeps everything in his own hands " is wasting an enormous amount of time and energy in fiddling about over things that his lay workers would gladly and thankfully do for him. I remember many years ago dining with a dear London incumbent. He apologized for a delay in the dinner as he had had to go to " look after the choir boys." I said (we were dear old friends), " What is the matter with the organist and choir master ? " He said that he must look after the boys and that he had to *pay them !* I pointed out that I never troubled my head about such matters. The organist paid the boys and sent in his account to the churchwardens. Why should the parish priest have to fuss about such things ?

It occasionally happens that priests forget the heads of departments and deal with the departments without reference to the responsible head. This is a grievous mistake, and most disconcerting to the head of the department. Once, during my holiday, an over-zealous curate dealt with two choir boys instead of reporting them (as of course he ought to have done) to the organist. This effectually spiked the organist's guns and lost us the two boys ! Let every head of department manage the affairs of his own department, and if

the parish priest has any complaint to make within the sphere of the department, let him settle matters with the responsible head.

But all this, delightful as it is, is only the external manifestation of the "shoving" of the Catholic laity that was such a new-found delight to me. The influence of the Catholic laity made itself felt in far deeper ways that had a great effect upon my own spiritual development. And these I will reserve to another chapter.

Meanwhile, I will just mention here one of the great advantages that the outward circumstances of my life had bestowed upon me, in that I had been accustomed to long sojourn in one place. I had been brought, by no action of my own, to S. Michaels', and there I was going to stay. Those whose duty it is to move quickly from place to place take root quickly in new surroundings. It is not so with me. My predecessor had been but eighteen months at S. Michael's; and yet, when I had long exceeded the term of his whole sojourn, I still felt myself "the new Vicar," and the traditions of his time seemed quite long established to me. Years slipped by, and did not seem to me long. I was made, by my outward circumstances, to grow and develop slowly: and all this kept me strangely young of my years. Young curates who had to knock about in the world and fend for themselves seemed years older than I; and I found it very difficult to "place myself" (i.e., to

understand my real position) among the Catholic incumbents when we used to meet for conference. They had had so much more experience than I had, and were so much more in touch with all sorts of things, that I felt quite a child among them, though in reality I was probably the oldest man in the room.

I cannot but see here the goodness of God in fitting His tools for the particular work that He has for them to do. This preternatural youth has been of enormous advantage to me in two directions. In my own spiritual life it has been of untold value to me that I have been quietly and gently led on, step by step, in the solid grasp of Catholic Truth, and have been mercifully preserved from disasters into which crude and hasty impulse sometimes leads quick and restless souls. And it has had its great advantage for me (as I have hinted in my preface) in that it has kept me in living touch with the younger generation of Catholic clergy at a time when priests of my own age are rather apt to stand aloof from them, and so enables me to be a sort of connecting link between the pioneers and the main body. And for this, as for all else, I can only say *Deo gratias.*

Photo *Dawkes & Partridge*

HENRY P. DENISON

CHAPTER IX

S. MICHAEL'S, NORTH KENSINGTON, INNER LIFE

I HAVE called attention, in the last chapter, to the admirable way in which the London Catholic laity came forward to do their part, and have instanced various ways in which they "do the shoving" as regards the externals of Church worship and parochial organization. I wish, in the present chapter, to say something of the inner life of a London Catholic parish as it came within the range of my own personal experience at S. Michael's.

"The inner life!" Ah! how that has come to be pushed out of sight in the peculiar position in which Catholics find themselves in these provinces! We have had to expend time, thought, and energies on contending for the ordinary decencies of Church worship and Church life, decencies that ought, in any normal condition of Church history, to have been taken for granted *at the starting point.* And this fact has caused a great wastage of spiritual force and power. It has, as far as it can, robbed English Churchpeople of that tranquillity that is

so essential for organic growth: it has tempted people to think that orthodoxy pure and simple will pass muster for religion, whereas a right faith itself is but the essential and indispensable means to an end, the end being union with God. We have had to recover our foundations where we ought to have been quietly building upon them: and the result of all this is the poverty of spiritual life that, broadly speaking, is so characteristic of Church life in these provinces.

Against whom, or what, has this disturbing contest had to be waged? Not against coarse, vulgar, ignorant Protestantism of the Lord George Gordon, the Church Association, or the Kensit type: not against the unbelief of the world. No! these things lie outside, and external foes cannot touch or hinder the inner life of the Church. "The world," whether it manifests itself in its open and undisguised hatred of our Lord, or whether it assumes the sheep's clothing of a world-made travesty of Christianity, is always there over against the Church, until it is finally and for ever destroyed by the second Coming of our Lord. We are always in this world as lambs among wolves: we always have been; as long as the world lasts we always shall be. It is our glory that the world should hate us, as it hated our Lord. The tranquillity of our inner life could never be affected by the manifestations of the hatred of the world and its false religion.

What is it then against which Catholics in these provinces have to contend for the very fundamental decencies of Church worship and Church life? I answer, deliberately and advisedly, that it is against that official "Church of Englandism" that has for so long sat as an incubus upon us here, crushing out, as far as it is able, the life, and hindering, as far as it is able, the growth, of God's own Vine in these provinces.

It seems as if official Church of Englandism has a conception of something that they call "the Church of England" which is a self-existent, self-contained and self-sufficient entity, having no duties towards, and little or no connection with, the rest of Apostolic Christendom. It occasionally happens that an English Bishop may make an appeal to the East, or even, if it serves his purpose, to the Roman Episcopate, if he sees a chance, by so doing, of robbing his people of some cherished devotion or practice. But this appeal is always made *in the negative direction*. When it comes to the positive assertion of truth, in faith, worship, or morals, the consensus of Apostolic Christendom is conspicuous by its absence in the dicta of official Church of Englandism. Some pettifogging local direction, which is open to quite two interpretations, is always flourished over our heads under one only of its two possible interpretations. I would note here the extraordinary disingenuousness (to use a polite expression) of the appeal to Rome or to the

East when it happens to suit their purpose, when at the very next turn of the road the consensus of Apostolic Christendom is flauntingly disregarded! We have heard of a Bishop who used the Eastern Church as a stick wherewith to beat his clergy: but where was the Eastern Church when the self-same Bishop wanted to marry a second wife? We find Bishops at the present moment eagerly catching at, and not ashamed to put forward, the right of the Roman Bishops to "regulate" Benediction. But what becomes of the Roman Episcopate when they want to obscure the Eucharistic Sacrifice, or to forbid (or at best to minimize) the adoration paid to the Blessed Sacrament? It is generally accepted that sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander: but this maxim does not apparently hold good with official Church of Englandism.

Let us look at some of the later actions of official Church of Englandism. We may leave on one side the ritual struggles of the sixties and seventies, just noting, as we pass them by, the attitude of the official Church of Englandism of that day, when it constituted itself the humble and obedient police of the Judicial Committee and Privy Council and of Lord Penzance's court; and consigning that dignified attitude to the oblivion that we are more than content to allow to it! And, with that reflection, we will think of it as it is known to us in more modern days.

(1) *Sunday Worship.* We are taught in our Catechism that the purpose of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist is the continual remembrance "of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ," etc., etc. We find, in our Liturgy, that the only mention of sermons (to which we are told to bring our children) is in connection with the Divine Service: we find that the "Communicants" are to be conveniently placed, and that there is a special direction for the singing of the Sanctus and Gloria in Excelsis. In saying this, one is wearily conscious of being some fifty or sixty years behind the time; but how is official Church of Englandism dealing with this matter even now? It is not too much to say that it smiles approval of the perfectly ridiculous anomaly of singing matins at eleven o'clock, and that (though, thank God, a collect, epistle, and gospel are now provided for times and special needs) the main idea for ordinary intercession lies in the direction of proper psalms and lessons for the Divine Office! It views with apparent complacency the introduction of that startling novelty known as "Matins and Sermon," while it is still known to utter its parrot cry about the "three communicants" in spite of the interpretation put upon that purely local direction by Bishop Cosin himself, who, if I am not mistaken, was the writer of that very rubric. I am not aware that official Church of Englandism has ever uttered a protest against the quite unauthorized custom of

turning people out after the Church Militant Prayer, where even now " a pause is made " (to put it in the favourite diction of the day), filled up probably by a small organ recital, to enable those very unworthy Christians who form the large bulk of an average congregation, together with the choir, who have been instructed to sing Sanctus and Gloria, to troop out of the church as though they were unbaptized or excommunicants! Has any Bishop ever taken the initiative in labouring in his Diocese, by precept and by example, for the daily Eucharist as the principal Act of Worship of the day? The war seems to have set official Church of Englandism on thinking that this latter may be desirable; but we do not find the Bishops taking the lead where, after all, it is merely a question of *solvitur ambulando*. The universal usage of East and West is " tolerated," with an occasional bleat about the three Communicants!

(2) The Sacrament of Penance. Here we thankfully note a vast improvement. Many of the Bishops betake themselves to this Sacrament, and will, in private, readily administer it. But official Church of Englandism will content itself with a tilt at Confessionals.

(3) Reservation, and consequent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Again the war has forced upon even official Church of Englandism the absolute necessity for Reservation: but official Church of Englandism confines its energies in this direction

to the consideration of how best to prevent the faithful from paying their loving devotion to our Lord in His dear Sacramental Life. The high-water mark of official Church of Englandism seems to be reached in a Nestorian distinction between a something that Bishops call "the Sacrament" and a something (apparently contained within it) that they call "the Presence," while an audacious speculator on the Episcopal bench has been known to speak of a "*possibly withdrawn Presence.*" And every weapon is taken out of the official armoury to put down the Exposition and Benediction that are so dear to simple souls, while, at the same time, the entirely modern abomination of Evening Communion is never (to use the modern Episcopal expression) "put under discipline."

(4) Prayer for the Faithful Departed. Here again the war seems to have impressed official Church of Englandism with the necessity of doing something in this direction; but it uses queer circumlocutions to avoid the formula in use in the rest of Apostolic Christendom, and tries to provide a quite unique "Church of England" way of dealing with the matter which shall be different from Mass or Divine Office for the Dead. And even this is mainly in honour of the brave soldiers who died as it were yesterday; until one would almost suppose that a line has to be drawn, in the Kingdom of Heaven, between the faithful

who died in the war and the faithful who died in their beds!

(5) Devotion to the Mother of God and the Blessed Saints. Can official Church of Englandism be said to be even so much as tolerant of the loving devotion to our Blessed Lady and the Saints that has been the instinctive expression of faith and love throughout the rest of Apostolic Christendom from time immemorial?

Now all this seems a long preamble to the consideration of my impression of the inner life of S. Michael's. But I am trying to tell my own experiences of my long life in this portion of God's Church. On looking back I can see how, from time to time, I have been cheered and invigorated by having been brought into contact with something or other that pointed to a higher and better ideal than I had been practically experiencing. In each case the glimpse passed when it had done its blessed work, and, needless perhaps to say, at each stage of growth the thing that had impressed one so much at first impressed one no more. As a boy I had been caught with what underlay the five o'clock Evensong at Margaret Street; later on it was Frome, in S. John Baptist week, where the very smell of the incense put one in another world; later on again I found the greatest rest and refreshment of spirit at the Benedictine Convent at Feltham, with which for a while I had the privilege of being associated. And each of these and other similar

visions was, for the time being, a stay and a stand-by. But what I want my readers to observe is that, in all these instances, it was not from official Church of Englandism that the rest of soul came, but from something that was there in spite of its cramping, chilling influence.

There is one thing that I must in justice, note, viz.: the happy influence of the solemn Office in Cathedrals and College Chapels. But that presupposes the Catholic ideal of the Divine Office that is not the outcome of official Church of Englandism.

Bearing all this in mind, I wish to record the extent to which I was impressed, on coming to London, by the grip that the Catholic Religion had upon the faithful laity. I would again remark that the circumstances under which I came to S. Michael's were singularly favourable, but the fact remains that we never had internal troubles or "aggrieved parishioners" to contend with. And this is very significant in view of my having been more than once driven into conflict with the Diocesan, and having had to bear the penalty of being boycotted by him. How natural it would have been for the people to have tried to influence me and persuade me not to go to the length of contending against the Bishop! Might one not have supposed that, if it came to a difference between the Bishop of London and myself, they might quite reasonably have argued that the Bishop was probably right and I wrong. *But they*

never did anything of the sort. Nay, more! When we Catholic incumbents thought it right to accede to a kindly personal request made by Bishop Creighton, and to forgo the High Mass for a while (as being impossible without incense), the laity were most indignant. Not a creature came to the church in consequence of the alteration, while the weekly collection dropped at once from £7 a week to £4! And when, on Bishop Creighton's death, things reverted to their former condition, there was general rejoicing, and a dear layman, speaking of the time during which we had lost the High Mass, said: "It knocked all the heart out of us!" Many people like to weave for themselves the romance of hot-headed young clergy forcing ritual upon an unwilling laity, but in my experience that is pure fiction. I always, at dear S. Michael's, had the laity solidly behind me, backing me up and cheering me along.

Now, how are we to account for this apparent conviction on the part of our laity that the Bishop of London was wrong in the demands that he made upon us? As I have said, it was not perhaps what most people would have expected. My answer to this question is, that the faithful laity had as much reason to hate the cramping, minimizing, chilling, oppressiveness of official Church of Englandism as I had. I used laughingly sometimes to wish that the Bishop would come incognito and live amongst us for a month or so, and know what our lay people

thought and try to learn their language. I fancy it would be somewhat of a revelation to him, as it had been to me.

But not only were the laity at S. Michael's wholly and enthusiastically with me; they helped me to learn things that I might not otherwise have thought to lie within the range of practical politics. It was the dear people out of the very slums of the Mission District who looked forward year by year to the all-night watch before the Blessed Sacrament in the Maundy Thursday Sepulchre. And when official Church of Englandism stepped in and robbed them of that joy, on the plea that the Bishop "could not have two rules in his Diocese," I told the Bishop that I should like him to know that, out of those slums, there had been thirty-five people in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament at three o'clock in the morning. And when this devotion had been filched away from them they were all "distrait" and at sea.

It was the young men of the parish who presented the statue of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Child, and who commissioned me, when I happened to be going to Brussels, to buy crowns for the statues!

When, after a time, we were able to fit up a beautiful Christmas Crib, the Lady Chapel was thronged after High Mass and Evensong, with devout worshippers praying at the Crib. When a votive candlestick had been anonymously pre-

sented for the statue of our Lady, it was enthusiastically filled with candles until official Church of Englandism swooped down and robbed us of it. When, in later years, we had Devotions before the Tabernacle after Evensong on Sunday, the churchwardens constantly remarked on the improvement in the evening congregation; and when, after this had gone on for two years, the time seemed ripe for Exposition and Benediction, it was enthusiastically received. And when, on my leaving S. Michael's, official Church of Englandism again swooped down on my successor and robbed the people of this joy, an old woman going out of the church after the Bishop's sermon was heard to say: "There! he has robbed us of the service that we understood!"

I might multiply instances, but these will suffice for my purpose. I would remark that I adhered throughout to my policy of doing things and not talking about them. I never said a word of explanation about any of these things from Benediction down to the votive candlestick. There was no elaborate scheme of preparation or "leading up to" any of these things. Directly they appeared the Catholic instincts of the faithful laity welcomed them. They did not seem to need to be taught how to use them; the devout use of them was, to them, the obvious thing.

Yes! It was official Church of Englandism that was their foe, and they *knew* that its negative

and minimizing dicta were wrong, whoever might be the exponent of them. Their intelligent grasp of Catholic Truth and of Catholic Devotion was most impressive. And, this being so, it is needless to say that High Church tricks would have no attraction for them whatever. They would be met by the scorn that they deserve. It was the Catholic Religion *as a whole* that laid hold of them, not bits and snippets torn from their context. They asked for bread and would not be put off with a pretty stone.

But I want to go deeper still, and to say something of the manifestation of this inner life in individuals. Already, in the West Country, I had found the Wisdom of God in the unlearned and simple. I remember, for instance, a poor old woman living in a little cottage by the roadside, who, on a day when I was visiting her, had just been reading the Passion in the Gospel: and she quietly remarked to me that it seemed to her that it was no wonder that the pains of hell were so great when the price of our redemption had been so great. Already, in my country home, I had had to carry the Blessed Sacrament to a dear woman who for years had led the choir in the old organ loft, and had been touched to hear her, in her bed, starting the "Salutaris Hostia" as the Blessed Sacrament was brought into the room. Already, in the old home, I had been moved by hearing an old woman of ninety-five, who could neither

read nor write, so pathetically taking her part in the Confiteor, when being communicated in her bed, by saying "A poor old woman, a poor old woman been a scrawling about so many years," and nodding her head when she had been communicated, saying, "Thank you, my Lord, thank you"; and already I had felt that these dear simple souls would respond to the deepest spiritual truths. And at S. Michael's one was constantly being cheered by the deep spiritual insight of the poor simple ones for whom official Church of Englandism did not cater. A dear old woman, who eventually died in the workhouse, would, at the age of eighty or more, make her Confession as a matter of course before her monthly Communion, and when asked by the Mission Priest whether she had not better communicate at eight instead of getting up for the seven o'clock Mass, said quite simply, "But I never go to bed the night before my Communion."

An elderly man, dying of cancer in the throat, having been prepared for Communion, which, if it was not his first Communion, was the first since quite young days, told the Sister of Charity after his Communion that he did not mind what he suffered *now*. Another dear man who had come out of the infirmary hopelessly ill was prepared for Confession and Communion, and had afterwards to be taken back to the infirmary. The infirmary nurse told one of us that she could not think what had happened to him: he used to be

always grumbling, and now he was always so patient and cheerful. A dear woman dying of cancer, who had been brought up as a Wesleyan and had a real love of our Lord, but seemed never to have heard of Communion, was prepared for her first Communion, and, when she had received Communion, she said to the Sister of Charity—"He has always given me good thoughts, and now He has given me Himself." Again one might multiply instances of individual grasp of spiritual truth among the unlearned, but these will suffice for my purpose.

Most striking, too, was the devotional aspect of the Church. Young women would come into the Church morning after morning on their way to work to say their prayers. Constant visits were being made to the Blessed Sacrament and to the shrine of our Lady: and constantly one would find people there with their rosaries. The genuflexion to the Tabernacle was wellnigh universal, the use of the Holy Water at the door almost equally so. People might say, "Oh, of course, a great point had been made of urging these things." I say again, "No." True to my principle, I had never opened my lips about any of these things. I had never explained them, nor had I given any instruction on them. All these things were the spontaneous manifestation of the faith and love of the laity. I well remember years ago carrying the Blessed Sacrament under my cloak up Ladbroke

Grove. It was Bank Holiday, and a dear little lad, in his Sunday best, was waiting to start out for his holiday. He, from my manner, knew that I had the Blessed Sacrament with me and at once knelt down in the street, Sunday clothes and all!

I should like to say a word about their trust in the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God, and in the ministration of the Holy Angels. So many would, in their prayers, turn quite naturally to our Lady and to the Angels. A dear old woman who could not read told me that she prayed to our Lord, and to His Blessed Mother "who gave her Son to die for us." She had the gist of the matter as regards the Compassion of Mary, And when prayers had been answered we used laughingly to say, "The Angels have been at it again." It was from the laity that the request came that the midday Angelus might be rung on Sundays before the Sacred Ministers left the Altar instead of, as before, while the people were leaving the church. Who taught them all these things? Not I, certainly. It was the opening up of love, joy, peace, faith, and goodness in simple souls that did not hinder the work of the Holy Spirit by "views" or "opinions" or (as the outcome of those hateful things) carping criticism and argument.

But the inner life of the faithful at S. Michael's had its influence in another direction, viz.: in rousing the hatred and contempt of "the man in the street." They could no longer afford to pass

us by as a negligible quantity. We could hardly pass down the street without having something said to us that the speakers would not have thought of saying or have dared to say to a lawyer or a doctor. We might be in cassock and biretta, or we might be in short coat: it made no difference whatever. A not uncommon greeting to me in the street would be, "There's a funny old man." Poor ignorant girls would raise that funny shrieking yell, which does duty with the Cockney for laughter, straight in one's face. Little boys would come up and make a low bow, saying "Good evening" if it were morning, or "Good morning" if it were night: a poor sort of joke, but one that never seemed to pall upon them. Sometimes the gibe was one that rebounded to our honour. Young women would often say in a sneering voice "JESUS CHRIST!" I was carrying the Blessed Sacrament once when a man looked at me and snarled "Beelzebub." Our dear Catholic men had, I fancy, a good deal to put up with in their workshops. But all this, curious as it may seem to say so, was distinctly encouraging. It was the reverse side of the faith and devotion at S. Michael's. It seemed to show that, however feeble and poor our efforts might be, it was at any rate more or less plain that we were with our Lord in His relentless warfare against the prince of this world.

Now I do not think that official Church of Englandism is unpopular in the world. It may

faintly amuse the man in the street, but I doubt if he thinks it worth hating. Its action upon Catholic life and devotion is, as we have seen, always in the direction of paring down and whittling away: its appeal to Apostolic Christendom is always made when it wants to minimize devotion. It is essentially "moderate." It looks like a sort of half-way house between the Church pure and simple and the world pure and simple. But it does seem to me somewhat significant that the hatred of the world should manifest itself against that which official Church of Englandism is trying to crush. Anyhow, the fact remains, and among one's impressions of life in a London Catholic parish I cannot help noting the hostility of the man in the street over against the fervour and devotion of the "man in the Church," and I cannot help thinking that there is intimate connection between the two things.

Here, then, are some of the impressions left on me by my twenty-two years' sojourn at S. Michael's. On the one hand, there were the many difficulties, the experience that had to be bought, and the ever-increasing financial anxieties as the neighbourhood more and more "went down"; but over against these there was always the joyous sense of the Catholic life and devotion springing up all around one, and of the consequent unfailing support and friendship with which I was surrounded. It was a happy twenty-two years.

In the spring of 1918 it was borne in upon me that, at the age of seventy, I was no longer physically up to the constant strain of the very strenuous work that had to be done. And realizing this, I turned at once to the other place to which I had been called, and where therefore my duties lay, viz., my Prebendal Stall in Wells Cathedral. As always throughout my life, so now the way was opened to me by no action of my own: and on October 7th, 1918, I finally said good-bye to dear S. Michael's, which had been my cherished and happy home for twenty-two years, and came to my third home in fifty-seven years.

CHAPTER X

WELLS, 1918

I WAS made Prebendary of Yatton in the Cathedral Church of Wells in the year 1896: and when I found myself no longer able to cope with the heavy work of S. Michael's, North Kensington, it was naturally to my Cathedral home that I should betake myself.

Now I can well remember the time when Wells was to me anathema. I could hardly conceive a more terrible fate than that of being doomed to live in Wells; I hated the very thought of it! The reasons for this frame of mind are not far to seek. In the green "salad days" of my youth I had been, as I have shown, caught up into the Catholic Movement. Everything in the new joy of an increasing knowledge of Catholic Truth would be measured by its conformity, or otherwise, with the Catholic Movement. And in the Ritual contest of the sixties and seventies we were struggling for an outward expression of our inmost faith. The purely academic position of the Oxford Movement had been found impossible. The old men of my young days might say to us, "You have got your

doctrine: why cannot you be content with that." But the answer would be that it was because common sense (to put it on no higher ground) would not allow of it. And we had behind us the whole experience of Catholic Apostolic Christendom. The unspeakable meagreness and coldness of English Church worship coincided so obviously with the decay of faith in the Eucharistic Sacrifice that it was impossible in the long run to take the purely academic line, as regards the essentials of worship, that had contented the early Tractarians. And more than this, the Ritual Movement was true, as being a protest against the unscientific and unintelligent way in which Protestantism makes its appeal to one side, and one side only, of human nature. The solemn tomfoolery of the cant phrase as to religion being an affair of the heart and of the mind was pulverized in the revival of the knowledge of Sacramental truth. But, like other tomfooleries of popular prejudice, this tomfoolery dies hard. I remember, in my young days, a good woman saying to me, "I know of no sacrament but the sacrament of the heart." What the dear thing meant by the "sacrament of the heart" is not quite apparent; but it is quite clear that it was something wholly different from what her Catechism had taught her. The Ritual Movement was out for the setting free of the whole man for the service of God: it contended against the impossibility of an academic faith that must never attempt to express itself in

action. It was practically saying, "Faith without works is dead, being alone."

Now think of all this revealing itself to my young mind, and then think of Wells fifty years ago. Protestantism is never more hatefully ridiculous than when it finds its meagre self confronted with such an outward glory as Wells Cathedral. Think of the majesty of our glorious choir, and contrast it with a little table at the end as the climax of all this glory, where a "lion and unicorn" performed "table prayers," the Sanctus, by a grim sort of irony, being sung as the two Canons moved up for their august function! The Blessed Sacrament was in those days conspicuous by its absence, the Holy Eucharist being perhaps celebrated once a month, though I doubt if even this advance had then been reached! And I have heard of an ecclesiastical authority of those far-away days having made a request that the Holy Eucharist might not be celebrated in one of the parish churches on the same day on which it might be "Communion Sunday" at the Cathedral! No wonder that my young mind turned in disgust from Wells!

But another reason for my dislike of Wells lay in my visits there having been all too often for the purpose of being confronted with the Bishop and his legal secretary, to be scolded and "hauled over the coals." It will be remembered that my Diaconate coincided with my dear uncle's resolve to advance things at East Brent, and that this

having brought him in conflict with the then Bishop' I was more or less made the whipping-boy, my licence being revoked and myself debarred from the priesthood for four years. So my experiences of Wells in those days were far from pleasant! I must again note that these things were in the first years of the Episcopate of the then Bishop, and that things materially altered as time went on; and I should like once more to say emphatically that I have the tenderest recollections of the unvarying kindness of that dear Bishop to me after my return to the Diocese, and I am convinced that, though my cause was right, I was a most tiresome and disagreeable young person. But the fact remains that, on all grounds, I had *no* love for Wells in my younger days.

But twenty years had elapsed between those far-away days and the time when I was appointed Prebendary of Yatton, and twenty years gives time for mellowing on both sides. On the Wells side the twenty years had seen improvements, and the great personal kindness of Lord Arthur Hervey had made visits to Wells very different to what they had been in my younger days. In connection with our "perseverance class" at East Brent, which had been inaugurated by a most kind letter from the Bishop, we had organized a sort of pilgrimage to the Cathedral on S. Andrew's Day as to the Mother Church of our Diocese, of which I have the most pleasant recollections. I had also been

brought into contact with the Corporation of the Vicars, several of whom had most kindly come forward to help me in an effort to raise money for two promising young musicians. A Quiet Day had been started at the Cathedral for the Clergy of the Diocese, at which we were most hospitably and kindly welcomed, and I have a pleasant recollection of much kindness from the then Dean on that occasion. The weekly Eucharist had (if I remember right) been started by Dean Plumptre, and altogether Wells was not exactly as it had been in my first recollections.

But if twenty years had wrought improvements at Wells, these twenty years had, I hope I may say, had their beneficial mellowing effect upon myself. The storm and stress of the Ritual war had practically come more or less to an end at the death of Archbishop Tait. The Judicial Committee had, without any formal renunciation of their claims, quietly vanished away ; and we were left in times of comparative peace to consolidate the ground that had been gained. And I myself was twenty years older, and, though the principles remained absolutely unshaken and unquestioned, one's inner self is more mellow at 48 than at 28.

So all unconsciously the way had been prepared for me to recognize, and to value, the high honour of the Prebendal Vocation. I like to remember that at the time of my installation at Wells I was merely in the position of a curate. I had, before

I accepted the Bishop's kind offer, pointed out this fact to the then Dean to know whether, under such somewhat unexpected circumstances, I should be acceptable to the Chapter: and I had been most kindly reassured by him on this head. As a matter of fact, it was but a few weeks later that I received the offer of S. Michael's, North Kensington; but I like to remember that I was a Prebendary before I was a Vicar!

My home and my work lying, as it did, in London, I was only able to take my place in our choir once or twice in the year, in my preaching turns. But in far-away S. Michael's I was practically linked on to Wells by the daily recitation of the psalms that fall to my stall in the daily psalter recited by the Chapter. The psalms of the Yatton stall are 22, 23 and 24. I should like here to quote the following words from Canon Church's history of the Cathedral in explanation of what perhaps might not otherwise be understood: "The daily recitation of the whole psalter by the members of the chapter, each member taking his appointed number of psalms, probably formed part of the 'consuetudinary' introduced by the Norman cathedral churches in the twelfth century. The usage can be traced to very early times in the ordinances of the churches of Wells, Lincoln, Salisbury and St. Paul's, London, though the actual division of the Psalter among the several prebends is of later date. The earliest draft of the statutes of the Church of Wells

contains the order that the whole psalter shall be said daily for the brethren and benefactors of the Church of Wells, and two Masses each week shall be celebrated for living and dead." Canon Church goes on to say that the present division of the psalms among the prebends was probably made in Dean Haselshaw's time, in 1298.

As I was probably the only one of the Prebendaries who lived with a Daily Mass, I always said Mass once in each week for the living and the dead at Wells, and so, by the daily psalms and the weekly Mass, did what I could to make up for my enforced absence from my stall.

We Prebendaries, in modern times, find ourselves in the position of the Levites who were scattered from the Temple because their portions had not been given them. Every farthing was filched away from us in the general "setting to rights" of Whig ascendancy in the early nineteenth century. The money that belonged to us has, no doubt, been spent to good purpose by the Ecclesiastical Commission, but, as usual, the pendulum of reform was swung too violently. In the very utilitarian, unspiritual, and unimaginative mind of that dull period, we were mere cumberers of the ground who ought to be routed about and made to "do something" in order to justify our existence. But had they left us but a proportion of what, after all, was our own property, we might have been able from time to time to come into our residence and fill our

places at the Choir Office, that much despised "work" that produces no tangible result, and therefore is beneath the contempt of those who measure everything by bustle and statistics, but which, when weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, will be found to be indeed worth the sacrifice of a life. But, for weal or woe, the portions are gone and the Prebendaries scattered, with very little chance of ever serving their stalls.

Two or three times my sisters and I were able to take a friend's house for a month in the summer, and come to Wells for a holiday, by which means we arrived at a knowledge of Wells that we had not previously possessed, and formed friendships here. And so it came to pass that when the time came for leaving S. Michael's we felt ourselves more or less at home in Wells.

So, in the Providence of God, I had been brought step by step to see that it was Wells, at long last, that was to be my home, and that it was the special vocation of a Prebendary that was to bring me along the road of my perfection. Now English people of the present day are always anxious about that foolish little verb "to do"; so people may be inclined to say (or think if they do not say), "But what on earth are you going to do in Wells?" I should be inclined to answer that question by asking another, viz.: "What do you suppose Prebendaries are meant to do?" And when we sit down to think what is the answer to this question, we shall

arrive at the fact that the " work " of a Prebendary is to take his part, day by day, in the solemn recitation in his choir of the Divine Office. Yes, that is the Prebendary's " work " : and how he may fill up the other hours of his day is quite a secondary matter, and quite subservient to this the great and wonderful work to which he has been called. The splendid foundations of our Cathedrals, with their staff of prebendaries, vicars, organist, singing boys etc., exist for the one purpose of the continual uninterrupted solemn recitation of the Divine Office day by day, year in year out. That is the work to which in my old age I am privileged to be able to give myself. Round that work my life is to revolve, and to that work my life is to be adapted.

But what exactly is this " Divine Office " for which these magnificent foundations have been designed ? The answer to this question is to be found in the simple historical fact that, all along the line, the instinct of the Church (which is, in other words, the Mind of the Holy Ghost) has led to the setting apart of certain members of the Church to divide up every day, by what are called the Hours of Prayer, into the resemblance of the first Good Friday, the said " Hours of Prayer " being recited in honour of the successive mysteries of our Lord's Passion in that awful day. So " the Divine Office " is, as it were, the handmaid and the continuation of the " Divine Service." That Divine Service, the main and central Act of Christian worship, was

instituted by our Lord Himself "the same night in which He was betrayed" for the *continual remembrance* ("anamnesis") of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and of the benefits that we receive thereby. And, based and founded upon the "continual" Divine Service, the Divine Office takes up the strain and carries it on throughout the day.

Now here, in England, an unfortunate attempt was made to "popularize" the Divine Office. I say, advisedly, that this well-meant attempt was "unfortunate," because it left out of sight the weighty and accumulated experience of centuries in the rest of Apostolic Christendom. It seemed as if we somewhat pert and self-reliant Englishmen thought that we could go one better than the rest of our brethren: and the lapse of some four centuries has shown that we were a little hasty in our Anglo-Saxon surmise: for, as time goes on, it becomes more and more evident that this well-meant, if crude, attempt has resulted in a dismal failure. The net result has been that the Divine Office has been torn from its context by being divorced from the "*continual* remembrance" ordained by our Lord Himself, and that it has been degraded into a kind of second-class and cheaper compartment, in which it is most absurdly and ignorantly supposed that English Christians will find an easier way of worshipping God than the way that our Lord Himself instituted. And the result of this turning of things upside down has been that the Divine Office

has for the most part been degraded into a sort of family prayer for a congregation as a prelude to the sermon! How lamentable, and how unspeakably ridiculous, are the notices that one finds on many a church door: "Evening Prayer and Sermon on Wednesday; Morning Prayer and Litany on Friday at 11 (or 11.30)." I know of a London church where this dismal and ridiculous notice was made even more dismal and ridiculous; for there the notice was, "Daily—Shortened Matins and Intercessions at 12.30!!" Such notices have been heard as "next Friday being Good Friday, there will be no service in this Church on Wednesday evening"; or "next Thursday being Ascension Day, the usual Wednesday evening service will be on Thursday morning." One does not ask if such things have any connection with religion: of course they have none: but do they indicate any gleam of common sense or of anything faintly approaching to a sense of humour?

These things show the depth of degradation to which our pert English self-sufficiency has reduced things by practically bowing out our Lord's Divine Service, and thereby degrading the Divine Office that was based upon the said Divine Service.

Now it has always seemed to me one of the most wonderful signs of life amongst us that, in the darkest days of Protestantism, our Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, the "quires and places where they sing," should have stood as a Catholic protest, maintain-

ing in their splendid foundation the ideal of the Divine Office: greatly misunderstood, as we shall see later on, and reduced in our English Breviary to the simplest, if not most meagre, proportions, but always there, testifying to the life of Apostolic Christendom in the midst of Protestant chaos. Here, in the Cathedral Choirs, we have our feet solidly down on the bed-rock. We are absolutely at one here with the Faithful Departed. The Divine Office is the song of the whole Church, the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride. I feel this so tremendously at Wells. We walk into the Cathedral over the graves of centuries upon centuries. When we assemble for Choir I find myself standing by the tombs of Saxon Bishops who have been there for nearly 1,000 years, and one cannot help feeling that their interest in the Choir Office of to-day is the same as one's own. One has got behind the shallow cries and shibboleths of the moment, and one is in the Family, talking the Family Language and merged in the Family interests. One feels that here, at any rate, the Lord has "shut us in." As one's Prebendal vocation keeps one linked to the Passion in a peculiar degree, so it peacefully links one into the Home and the Family of God. One realizes here in a singular degree one's place in the Household of God. As members of a Family it is so rude (to put it in a blunt way) for one or two to be engrossed in their own concerns and to be having their own

private conversation, in an unknown tongue, in the family circle. It is so out-of-place to be immersed in things that are here to-day and gone to-morrow, e.g., war, peace, armistice, reconstruction, etc., etc., things that cannot concern the bulk of the Family, i.e. the Faithful Departed, and to be incessantly babbling to ourselves about these things when the bulk of the Family are thinking and concerning themselves about the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the world to come. So the Prebendal vocation brings one down to the broad simple issues of life: and Wells deals with the things that concern the dead and the living, which are the only things that really matter at all: and one emerges from the pettiness of things that are here to-day and gone to-morrow into the sweet simplicity of things that cannot be shaken, and therefore remain.

How impressive it is to find the Office sung in all its stateliness, day by day, with practically no one there but those whose Office it is! People with a sort of half-Protestant mind are sometimes given to complain of the paucity of the "congregation." But what do we want a "congregation" for? Outside of the Liberty of S. Andrew, Wells is either in the parish of S. Cuthbert or in that of S. Thomas! If people of leisure have the privilege of being in our Choir while we sing Office so much the better for them. It can make no sort of difference to us. I think it is just splendid to have

the stateliness of the Office, rendered as it is at Wells, where the music is exquisite, going on in this way without a "congregation." For the greater part of my life I have laughingly said that I think the Church is perfectly delightful from Monday morning till Saturday night, and that from Saturday night till Monday morning we have to "put up with it." And especially do I feel this in Wells. Sundays and special occasions, with "congregation" and Sermon, seem to break in upon that blessed monotony of the Divine Office that is a reflection of the unearthly tranquillity of the Life of God.

Again, how things are linked on to the Faithful Departed by customs and rules that would be quite intelligible and natural to our dead brethren of centuries ago! One realizes these things where one lives on the spot and can therefore take one's part in the daily life of our Choir. For instance, the Office is essentially and wholly the *Chapter* Office. It is the Chapter reciting, as a Chapter, the Office of the whole Church for the Church at large and for our Diocese in particular. That the Office should be sung except in the presence of at least one Prebendary is simply unthinkable. The Canon in residence is the official Prebendary who is responsible for the day. Should anything occur on any given day to make it impossible for him to be in Choir, he cannot leave the Office to be sung by the Priest-Vicar and Vicars. He must find another Prebendary to whom to delegate his office

for that particular day. Were it a matter of a "congregation" there would be no reason why the Priest-Vicar should not officiate. But it is not a matter of "congregation," it is the matter of the Chapter. It falls, at Wells, to the official Prebendary to read the Lessons; but if the Dean is present the last lesson falls to him as the Head of the Chapter. Why this? It is not a whim of the moment, arranged in the vestry just before the Office. The lesson has always fallen to the officiant or "celebrant"; and the last lesson (or group of lessons) at Matins was, so to speak, the lesson of honour. Those, for instance, who have attended the Tenebræ Office in Holy Week may remember that the Celebrant assumes the cope for the ninth lesson. All these things would seem perfectly natural and familiar to the Prebendaries of centuries who lie in their graves at Wells.

So, as I have said, the prebendal vocation brings one down to the simple issues of created life. It is indeed a joy to me to find myself in my old age at last free to follow the blessed simplicity of life in "quires and places where they sing," and to realize as years go on, that after all that may be said and done in this feverish and restless world, the issues of life are perfectly and absolutely simple, viz., God and His Creation, and the relation in which His Creation stands to God. Quite, quite simple. The "deep" of created life calling to the "deep" of the Uncreated, Incomprehensible, Eternal Life of God.

There are those to whom the Prebendal Stall seems like a kind of Board School medal, a reward for good conduct or long service. The Prebendary to whom the honour has been accorded will preach, in his turn, once or twice in the year: and that seems about all. But the Prebendaries who are lying in the cloister or under the Cathedral pavement will think or care little or nothing about the "preaching turns." The great fact to them will be the solemn collation to the prebend by the Bishop, followed by the solemn installation, which two facts constitute the man a Prebendary, incorporate him with the Chapter, give him his share in the Chapter prayers, and put him in possession of his stall, which is thenceforth his freehold. It is these things that bind us all together in one Chapter, dead and living. And this priceless possession does, as I have tried to show, widen our range of vision, and brings us to that simplicity of life to which I have alluded, in which one feels something of what our Lord means when He says, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

CHAPTER XI

WELLS (*continued*)

I HAVE tried, in the last chapter, to show how Wells is really a home for the soul, and how, in the perpetual Choir Office, one is brought in an especial degree into daily contact with the Passion and with the Faithful Departed.

Coming as I did from a long sojourn in London, I could not but be struck by the influence of the Cathedral and its surroundings here in Wells. We have not here, as in so many Cathedral towns, a large bustling town with a Cathedral in the midst of it. Wells lies quite off the main roads of traffic. Bath, Bridgwater, and Taunton lie on the main line, and are much more emphatically County towns. Here the little old city clings, as it were, round the Cathedral, which is emphatically the point of its history. And it is in this fact that the sharp contrast is shown between the position of the Church in London and Wells respectively. One feels that one has come from one extreme term to the other. In London one has become used to the life of the Church as a somewhat isolated fact in the midst of a practically heathen popula-

tion. Those who worship in our churches do so more or less from personal conviction, with the result that they have perhaps a more clear vision of the issue at stake. But in Wells the customs and habits of generations still hold good, and one may perhaps say that one finds here a solid *substratum* of old-fashioned piety that cannot probably give so definite an account of itself as can the more restricted piety of London.

Now while this gives a certain vantage ground in Wells, it has the disadvantage of inducing a tendency to "settle upon the lees" which is, at one and the same time, the cause and the effect of the failure in various directions to appreciate the ideal of the Cathedral life. While, as a fact, that life has a deep effect on the lives of those who for generations have lived under the shadow of the Cathedral, one cannot but feel that the very force of long custom has probably tended to weaken the grasp of the Faith as viewed from its intellectual side: in other words, that the very force of long habit in quiet surroundings has made it difficult for Churchpeople in Wells to give an account of the Faith that is in them: to give, that is to say, a satisfactory answer to the importunate little question "Why?"

Coming as a comparative outsider to make one's home in Wells, one cannot but be struck with grave anomalies in the everyday life of the Cathedral, and of a wide divergence in many

ways between the ideal and the actual; and one cannot help noticing that the said anomalies do not seem to trouble the minds of the great majority of the Churchpeople in Wells, and that the vision of the ideal has rather faded away before the facts of the actual. And this is what I should be inclined to call "settling upon the lees."

I want now to call attention to some of these anomalies that strike one in the Wells of to-day. These are the outcome of our English Church history of the last four centuries or so; nor does the fact of their existence to-day mean that things all along have been at a standstill. On the contrary, as I have already said, there have been considerable improvements even within the time of my own recollection.

Things are bound to move slowly in Wells: and, in one way, it is good that it should be so, provided always that they do move, and that we do not "settle on our lees" and come to think the present state of things to be satisfactory or in any sense permanent. Things can be put up with on a journey that could not be endured as a fixed permanence.

The first thing that calls for notice is the position of the Divine Service as regards the Divine Office. We have, thank God, had for the last five years a daily Mass in the Cathedral at eight o'clock. But this can hardly be said to be of the nature of a Chapter Mass. (*a*) The Prebendaries are not

there in their official capacity, as they are at the Choir Office ; (*b*) on two days in the week the Lady Chapel is lent to the Theological College, and on those days there is no Cathedral Mass as such. It seems as though the daily Mass were regarded mainly as an opportunity for a handful of people to make their Communion. Its connection with the Divine Office is rather conspicuous by its absence !

It is the old story of our English ways, the result of the infiltration, in our later history, into the Church life of these provinces of foreign Protestant ideas. In spite of all that we are taught in our Catechism, it remains true that to the bulk of our English Churchpeople the commemorative aspect of the Holy Eucharist, which is put in the forefront in the Catechism, has receded into the background. To fit in with modern English habits of thought the Catechism would have to be altered, and it would seem as if the answer to the question, " Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained ? " ought to be, " for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls," etc., etc. Here (though it marks a distinct stage of advance) is a detached administration of Communion to three or four people, followed by an apparently detached recitation of the Choir Office. Our past history will largely (and to some minds perhaps satisfactorily) account for this incongruity, but that it should be looked upon in any way as a satisfactory

arrangement, or as being at all of the nature of a permanent solution, is *simply unthinkable.* We can put up with its utter meagreness for the moment, but that is all that we can say for it.

Surely the Prebendaries, who have been set apart for the perpetual solemn recitation of the Divine Office, should assemble each day for the solemn Divine Service in their official capacity, vested as for the Divine Office. This would at any rate be a step in the right direction, and ought not to present any great difficulty. One realizes the difficulty at present of a Chapter Eucharist solemnly sung after Matins each day; but that the Prebendaries should, in their official capacity, be present at a daily Eucharist does not seem to be outside the range of practical politics. Meanwhile we can but look upon the present arrangement, though an improvement upon former ways, as a very meagre temporary makeshift.

The next matter of supreme importance is the absence of a Solemn Eucharist on most Sundays and Festivals. The eight o'clock Eucharist on ordinary Sundays has some slight resemblance to an official Chapter Eucharist; but it is melancholy to reflect that when a peal of bells is rung for the principal devotional exercise of the Sunday morning it should merely indicate that Matins on Sundays is put off for an hour, bringing it to the quite ridiculous hour of eleven, whereas ten o'clock, the hour for the daily Office during the week, is quite

late enough for Matins in all conscience! It seems a poor way of Sunday rejoicing that the Lord's Day should be marked by a whole hour's delay in singing the first Office of the day. Again, one realizes the difficulty of the solemn singing both of Office and Divine Service each Sunday, though in many "quires and places where they sing" it is managed every day. But would it not be possible for the Prebendaries on Sunday to recite their Choir Office at an earlier hour, as is done already on Sundays when there is an Ordination, the solemn Eucharist being sung at eleven?

We are being told now, officially, of the extreme desirability of making the Divine Service the principal act of worship on a Sunday morning. It being assumed, therefore, that this is desirable, where can it be more easily realized than in a Cathedral Church where there is practically no cure of souls and no congregation to be considered? Moreover, if we are officially told that it is desirable, it is obvious that it is the Mother Church of the Diocese that is expected to lead the way. It seems to savour somewhat of faith without works that when our rulers are urging the parochial Clergy to make the Eucharist their principal act of Worship on Sunday mornings, the said parochial Clergy should notice that the Cathedral makes no move in the direction that their rulers are telling them is the right one. May they not justly say "Physician, heal thyself"?

Does not the supposed difficulty in achieving in our Cathedrals what is being trumpeted as being desirable lie, to a large extent, in the fact of the Cathedrals having an eye round the corner, so to speak, at a "congregation" and what the "congregation" may think? If a congregation likes to attend the Choir Devotions, it is their privilege that they are allowed to do so. They can have no "rights" in the Cathedral Choir. If a man does not like what goes on in Cathedral Choir he has no sort of grievance, for nobody asked him to attend the Cathedral. The inhabitants of the Liberty of S. Andrew are after all but a handful in Wells. Whatever difficulties the parochial Clergy may find in carrying out the change that our rulers tell us is desirable, the Cathedrals are confronted with no such difficulties, and it would immeasurably strengthen the hands of the parochial Clergy if the Cathedrals, where things are comparatively easy, were to set the pace in carrying out without further delay what is admitted to be desirable.

It is all very well to ask these apparently simple questions, but it is of the nature of a fencing match, as all parties concerned know perfectly well. Those who thrust and those who parry are really playing a game. What really lies in the way of realizing the ideal in Wells is not this, that, or the other supposed difficulty, but the fact of long-standing prejudice. We older Catholic Clergy have lived to see, in a large measure, the Holy Eucharist

reassert itself in England as the Divine Service. The daily Mass has become to us the normal thing. (I have lived with the daily Mass myself for nearly fifty years.) High Mass, or Missa Cantata, has come, thank God, to be to us the normal thing. But two antiquated superstitions (for I can call them nothing else) of Protestantism still hold their ground. Superstitions die hard; and the more foolish they are the more tenaciously they seem to hold their ground. Now let us pull out these two superstitions and take a good look at them. Here they are:

(*a*) That the commemorative aspect of the Holy Eucharist interferes with the completeness and all-sufficiency of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

(*b*) That the assisting at Mass is supposed to be a substitute for Sacramental Communion.

These are the ideas that lurk at the back of the English Church mind; and it is really these two superstitions that stand in the way of the realization of the ideal at Wells. Let us just think a moment about each of these pre-eminently false ideas.

(*a*) Was our Lord starting a new idea when He instituted the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament? Was an "anamnesis" of the Sacrifice of His Death something hitherto unheard of? Certainly not! What was it that differentiated the Sacrifice of Abel from that of Cain? What was the gist and meaning of the Divinely ordained Levitical Sacrifice?

Could they be anything but the continual memorial of the One All-Sufficient Sacrifice of the Cross? If the daily sacrifice of the Tabernacle and of the Temple were an interference with the All-sufficiency of the One Sacrifice, then there might be some ground for thinking that the new and perfect remembrance might have that effect. But if the Aaronic Priesthood in no way interfered with the High Priesthood of our Lord, but, on the contrary, derived its whole efficacy from that High Priesthood, why is it suddenly to be supposed that the case should of necessity be wholly different with the Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec? The Institution of the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament is just what we might have expected. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Hitherto the "remembrance" had been the best that up to that time had been possible, viz., the sacrifice of blood. Now the "remembrance" was to be the perfect one of the Body and Blood of Christ Himself. They had "done" that; now they were to "do" this. And in each case the remembrance had been ordained by God Himself. Volumes, of course, have been written, and may be written, about the Eucharistic Sacrifice, but the point lies just here.

But we pass from the theoretical to the practical in our attempt to show up this fallacious superstition. It is the incontestable fact that for 1,500 years after the Descent of the Holy Ghost it was

the Holy Eucharist that was *the* Divine Service of Christendom. Then this hare was started, and the bogey of "the Mass" was exploited for all it was worth. But would it ever occur to any decently instructed Christian that when he goes to Mass he is going to add something to the Sacrifice of the Cross? Of course not! Such an idea never crosses his mind. But it suited the purpose of the new religion to raise a scare about the Mass. The real crime of the Mass was that it did not at all fit in with Luther's new theory as to original righteousness and original sin: and "ruat cœlum" that brand-new theory must stand. So the hare was started, and the hue and cry went on. And it is the echo of this hue and cry that underlies the glaring anomalies of our Cathedral life at Wells to-day.

(*b*) Is it true that those who worship God in our Lord's own Divinely appointed way are less tenacious than Protestants of Sacramental Communion? Most certainly it is absolutely false! We have often heard the pompous shibboleth about "Mass in the place of Communion," but what is this shibboleth worth? It is not worth the breath with which it is spoken, or the paper and ink with which it is written. It is absolutely and utterly false! And if anyone wants to prove for himself what a monstrous lie this is, let him cross the water into some Catholic country and give himself the trouble to get up in the early morning and go

to Mass. He will probably find more Communions being made on an ordinary weekday than he will find in his own parish church on a Sunday. We were told some years ago of 5,000 men making their Easter Communion at Notre Dame, in Paris. But it is the everyday Communions that must perforce strike the Englishman who has let himself be hoodwinked all these years by this pompous falsehood. We make a great fuss over our statistics and "Communicants' Rolls," etc., but our Easter Communions tell their own tale, and ought for ever to stop our mouths as to Mass taking the place of Communion; for, as a matter of fact, it is English people who have ceased to go to Mass who are most slack about Sacramental Communion. Do let us then try to nail these two lies to the counter. They are obvious lying shibboleths, but there they are, imbedded in the mind and in the jargon of official Church of Englandism; and the result is—the Wells of to-day!

Here, then, are two reforms that seem as if they ought to be within the range of practical politics, viz.; (*a*) that the Prebendaries should attend a daily Mass in their official capacity; and (*b*) that the Eucharist should be solemnly sung each Sunday at eleven o'clock, as it is already on great Festivals and Ordinations. That there will be some difficulties in the way is evident; but the present condition of affairs is a makeshift that must be frankly recognized as such until better days dawn.

Next we notice the side Chapels and Chantries. Among the many improvements in the Cathedral of late years, not the least is the restoration of Altars, which at this moment number seven, while an eighth is now in process of restoration. But we have still to wait for any practical use being made of this multiplicity of Altars. It is a really serious matter that on two days in each week there should be no Cathedral Mass, because on those days the Lady Chapel is lent to the Theological College! And it is much to be wished that this anomaly should cease; and that when the College is in possession of the Lady Chapel a Prebendal Mass may be said at one or other of the six remaining Altars.

Old prejudices die hard; and we will be content to wait, provided that we do not settle on our lees and come to regard the present state of things as being in any way a final solution of the matter.

Then, in everyday matters of external order we cannot but be struck with the want of proportion between the minute and careful order of the Choir Office and the somewhat happy-go-lucky "rule of thumb" that characterizes the Divine Service. And here I must, though with some reluctance, speak of "sins of commission," which are in one way more grievous than "sins of omission," because there is less excuse for them. The old-fashioned North and South end (which has been rather wittily called the "lion and unicorn")

use has disappeared. With all its glaring faults, however, this "use" had a certain precedent behind it. But the present "use" is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It carries no tradition with it. When a change is being made one might have expected that, as far as it goes, it would be on right lines. But while we have gained the lights and the Eastward position, which certainly are gains as far as they go, our Altar "use" is hopelessly at sea. Again let me say that there is nothing surprising or overwhelming in that: and we are quite content to "put up" with it as a temporary makeshift. But if it is to come to be crystallized into a quasi authoritative "use," we cannot help asking ourselves whose "use" it is. I heard not long ago of an Ordination candidate being solemnly instructed, in preparation for his Ordination, how to celebrate. Having been used to serve at the Altar in his lay days he knew *that he was being instructed wrong*. This is not a very dignified circumstance. If I am asked to fall in with a certain "use" at the Cathedral Altar, I am quite ready to do so as a temporary makeshift: but that does not prevent me from seeing the absurdities of the said "use." All will be well if we steadily look upon things as being in a transition stage. But to regard our Cathedral Altar "use" as a finality, in its glaring contrast to the dignified order of the Choir Office, is quite out of the question.

As regards the Choir Office, with all its dignified

order and stateliness, it is restful and satisfying as a whole; but one feels that here, at least, one might expect to find an attention to detail that is all too often wanting. We seem, at last, to have come to recognize the fact that Te Deum is not to be sung during Advent and Lent; but now no notice is taken in this respect of Festivals which fall during Advent and Lent, which form the exception to the rule; while, at the same time, one may hear between Septuagesima and Easter hymns that bristle with Alleluias being sung at the time in which Alleluia is forbidden. Surely in the Cathedral Choir, where the solemn singing of the Divine Office is pre-eminently *the* work, the Diocese should have set before it a pattern of accurate attention to ordinary rules! That Jubilate should constantly take the place of Benedictus is a part of unfortunate past history, and marks a certain epoch in our Cathedral music, and as such we must put up with it. But even in our restful Choir Office we cannot but find occasional sins of commission for which there is really *no* excuse, *e.g.*, the thrusting of war prayers or peace prayers into the Office itself as Collects for the day. Why this should be allowed one is at a loss to understand; for the obvious place for such prayers is among the memorials that follow the Office proper; the Collects being of matters that concern the whole Church, as the Office is the Voice of the Bridegroom and of the Bride.

One more thing I cannot but notice, viz., the neglect of the Faithful Departed. Here again we come across a popular superstition which started, with other superstitions, at the Reformation. What is this superstition? It is that Catholics think that they can alter a man's condition from lost to saved by the Masses and Prayers of the Church. Did ever a more flimsy lie succeed in hoodwinking people who are apparently sane and reasonable beings? The prayers of the Church for the Faithful Departed are given to them just because they are presumably already in a state of salvation. To suppose that Catholics are capable of thinking that they can pray a soul from a state of damnation to a state of salvation is a folly that is only to be paralleled by the Protestant idea that an "indulgence" is a permission granted to a man beforehand to commit a sin.

But the great world war, among other consequences that it brought in its train, led people on all sides to revolt against the coarse brutality that forbids Christians to pray for their departed brethren. This had its ludicrous as well as its pathetic side: for what can the fact of War have to do with the matter? Why should we be anxious to pray for those fallen in battle while we are quite content to leave those who have died in their beds to take care of themselves? This does not seem to strike them. So we had the new experience of Lords-Lieutenant requesting Bishops to arrange

for a Commemoration on some given day of those in the county who had fallen in the war. All very well and nice as far as it went. But what about the county worthies who have lain for centuries in our Cathedral and its cloisters? Might not the Chapter stand for them as the Lord-Lieutenant did for his soldiers, doctors, and nurses? Are they really worthy of less consideration? If we are not to be afraid to pray for departed soldiers, doctors, and nurses, are we to be afraid to pray for Bishops and Prebendaries, relations and friends? Either it is right to pray for the dead or it is wrong. The war could make no possible sort of difference in the matter. But the war will come, in the Providence of God, to be the thin end of the wedge; and as, thank God, a Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the Faithful Departed have been authorized in consequence of the war, may we not hope that they will be constantly used for all the Faithful Departed and for our own dear ones at Wells, Bishops, Deans, Prebendaries, Vicars, Founders, Benefactors, Friends and Relations, as an ordinary part of our weekly devotions. Monday is, by general custom, taken as the day of the Dead. Is it quite too much to expect that on any Monday that does not happen to be a Festival the Divine Service may be said for the Faithful Dead? That, at any rate, would be a step in the right direction, and seems quite feasible; and perhaps some day we may find our

beautiful Chantries restored, and Priests again "singing for souls" in those Chantries which were raised in faith by those who were but asking to be continually remembered before God.

I am afraid that I may seem to be as the ill bird that fouls its own nest; but I have yet to learn that it should be accounted as true loyalty to shut one's eyes to glaring faults, and to pretend that all is right where there is much that is obviously wrong.

Let me say once more from the bottom of my heart that, in spite of all shortcomings and failures, I find Wells a true home of the soul. In the Providence of God there is so very much here that "remains": so very much that is the fair flower and fruit of the Catholic Religion, and of the Catholic Religion only. And, with all this before one's eyes, one can thank God and take courage: and surely the message of our Lord to the Church in Sardis may well apply to England in general, and to Wells in particular: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die." In the minds of shallow, noisy, materialistic, would-be Reformers, our Cathedrals, with their splendid foundations, are mere cumberers of the ground. With "life and liberty" in the air, and with the fearless turning upside down of everything, with "reforms" whose purpose seems to be to justify the Church of England to the world, and with the feverish desire to "popularize," if

not to vulgarize, our old Liturgy, and to relax the moral standard at every turn to meet the blatant unbelief of the moment, we may well think that "the things which remain" are "ready to die." We are to be watchful over them and to strengthen them. Strengthen them by infusing life into them; strengthen the Divine Office, e.g., by restoring it to its right context; strengthen the Cathedrals by rescuing them from that absurd want of proportion that now characterizes them; in a word, to be watchful and strengthen the things that remain which are ready to die, because those things are our Lord's and not ours, because they are of Heaven and not of earth; because they "stand" in the general chaos and confusion, according to the old saying, "*stat Crux dum volvitur orbis.*"

CHAPTER XII

REFLECTIONS

I HAVE brought my recollections up to the present moment, when I find myself, in my seventy-seventh year, close to the end of my earthly pilgrimage. I have tried to sketch some of the salient points in my personal recollections in the stirring times in which it has pleased God to place my earthly life. But, of course, the real history of these seventy-two years of my life lies within, and cannot be reached by a narrative of more or less external things. It remains, however, true that the outward and the inward must, and do, act and react upon each other; and I should therefore like, in taking leave of my Church recollections, to sum up certain reflections upon these seventy-two years, and to note certain way-marks that stand as milestones upon the journey, in the hope that they may not be otherwise than helpful to some of my brethren.

It goes without saying that one's first recollection on looking back must be that of one's own hapless failure to respond to the goodness of God. When I reflect how, in the gentle patience of God,

the fulness of Catholic Truth has been unfolded to me, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little, and then think of the forty-seven years of my parochial life—the twenty-five years at East Brent and the twenty-two years at S. Michael's—I can but realize my personal failures. When Catharine Lassagne watched the Curé d'Ars in prayer before the Tabernacle, she tells us that she was impressed by her own "spiritual misery." So it is! The Saints reveal to us the possibilities of daily life in the Catholic Church. They raise the standard before our eyes and set the pace of Catholic life; and as we gaze at the Light of our Lord shining in and through their blessed lives, and reflect that this is merely the natural outcome of the Catholic Faith, the Catholic worship, and the Catholic Sacraments, we can but cry, "*Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*"

And here one notes a milestone along the road. The idea of modern unbelief is to divorce moral truth from dogmatic truth. On all sides we find the tendency to relegate revealed truth to the limbo of "open questions" or "points of view," while, at the same time, men are anxiously tenacious of certain fragments of Christian Morality. The attempt is foredoomed to failure. In the first place, their "morality" is left, like Mahomet's coffin, hanging between earth and heaven. In the second place, it is an ever-diminishing quantity

of morality to which they cling. We have an instance of the former of these two results in "the International Society" for Franciscan research. This is the outcome of Sabatier's French Protestantism, and is largely an attempt to divorce the life and deeds of S. Francis from the Religion that gave them birth, to divorce the works of S. Francis from his faith. Sabatier and Co. can see the beauties of the Franciscan ideal, and would be glad to assimilate them: but being, as they are, out of sympathy with Catholic faith, worship, and sacraments, they have to try to make out that the Franciscan ideal can exist independently of these things. How S. Francis himself would have regarded this impudent attempt to divorce his works from his faith it is not difficult to conjecture: but my immediate point is that this attempt would leave the Franciscan ideal as a phenomenon without a cause, isolated and detached. No one, I fancy, supposes for a moment that an International Society for Franciscan research is going to produce the Franciscan life out of the dry ground of Protestantism; but I quote the somewhat ludicrous instance of this society as an example of the attempt to divide Christian morality from Christian Faith. Then, secondly, history shows us that directly Christian ethics come in any way to be divorced from their context, i.e., Christian dogma, the very foundation of Christian morality itself is sapped, and if we want an illustration of this truth

one has but got to look at the attitude taken by Protestantism as a whole, from Luther downward, towards the Divine Mystery of Holy Marriage, as revealed in the unvarying tendency of the Protestant mind towards the relaxation of the Christian standard in the direction of Divorce, and in the failure to note the principle on which the Church bases her Table of Forbidden Degrees. So I should mark my first milestone as noting the unity of Faith and Morals, and as emphasizing the fact that the Catholic Faith is the root out of which Catholic morality springs : so that to tamper with dogma is, *ipso facto*, to tamper with the moral code of God.

I should be inclined to place my next milestone as that emergence that I have noted in Chapter IV, from out of the merely moral plane, in things spiritual, on to the physical plane. This is perhaps only another way of stating the conviction that the Mysteries of the Faith are the root, and the one and only root, out of which Christian Duty springs ; and that Christian Duty is only Christian Faith in action : in a word, that the Ten Commandments are the inevitable corollary of the three Creeds. Broad Churchism seems to make moral " goodness " its whole stock-in-trade. How characteristic it is of this " school of thought " that its great protagonist, Dr. Arnold, should have laid down as his guiding principle that the Almighty could not do an immoral thing, and that, therefore,

if we think anything wrong we are bound to believe that He did not do it! One observes in this appalling doctrine that it is what "we think" that is created into the court of final appeal. In other words, it is "we" who are the centre, while God and His ways are placed quite on the circumference, so that, instead of our accepting a Revelation from God, it is we who, in our superior and all-seeing wisdom, are to teach God what He may or may not be allowed to do! We have set up a moral standard of our own as the foundation of our religion. That is to say, we have, as I have indicated before, based our religion rather upon moral ideas than upon the facts of God and His Creation. So my second milestone will be, "Get off the merely moral plane on to the physical plane." "Take heed to the spiritual *facts*, and Christian morality will spring as the flower and fruit of those facts." I think that I should like to inscribe upon this milestone, "Thou bearest not the Root: but the Root thee." It does indeed mark an epoch in one's spiritual history when one is lifted off the merely moral on to the physical plane; and it dawns upon one that the Christian religion is not a bundle of moral precepts, but the knowledge of the Truth of God and His Creation.

Having reached this milestone of spiritual facts, one is led on, I think, to see something of the solidarity and unity of the Creation as answering to the Uncreated Unity of God. In earlier days

the Christian Religion had mainly appeared to one as a method devised for one's personal salvation. One began now to see something of what is meant when we are told that the Purpose of God is to "*reconcile all things to Himself in Christ.*" "All things!" We had up till now been thinking exclusively of human souls as the sphere, if not the purpose, of the Incarnation. We had practically forgotten that we children of the Church are to be "*a kind of first fruits*" of God's Creatures. We had got into the habit of drawing a line between what we were pleased to call "things religious" and what we were pleased to call "things secular." Protestantism had encouraged this wrong frame of mind by its ridiculous shibboleth that "religion is an affair of the heart and mind." This superstition faded away when it became apparent to us that sin had had an effect upon the *whole Creation*. Why should "the Creation itself" be groaning under the bondage of corruption if sin was merely an affair of the individual soul of the individual sinner? One began to see that the Incarnation has to do with sun, moon and stars, sea and dry land, plants and trees, fish, birds, insects, animals, etc., etc., as it has to do with the souls and bodies of men. One was caught by the unity of the glorious Song of the Three Holy Children. The next milestone may be marked as the Unity of Creation as answering to the Unity of God.

This would lead us on to an intelligent apprecia-

tion of Catholicity as being the test of Truth, and, more than even that, as being the only thing under the sun that is absolutely true, because it is the only thing that recognizes *all the facts* of the case. I remember, in my young days, being much struck with the argument in Baring Gould's *The Origin and Development of Christian Belief*, viz., that "error is always negative, whereas truth is the sum of the greatest number of positive assertions." I remember, too, being impressed with F. D. Maurice's book on the Kingdom of God, showing as it does the partial, and therefore distorted, visions of Truth that have caused the rise and continuance of the various sects. To put it in a familiar way, one saw that if a Churchman were to become a Dissenter he must begin by denying many things that he already believed, whereas, if a Dissenter becomes a Churchman, he has not got to deny any single positive thing that he already believes, but has merely to add to his Faith things that before he denied. And if one asks why this is invariably and inevitably so, one finds that it is because deflection, in any way or degree, from the Catholic principle is always the result of denial of some positive truth or another, inasmuch as the sum of truth is revealed by God to that peculiar people that He has sanctified to Himself, in whom He enshrines His Revelation, and from whom it is to go out to the whole world. This peculiar people is the Catholic Church, which

is the Communion of Saints, inasmuch as it is the Body of Christ, the Family of God, consisting of those who have been "born of God," having been "born again" of water and of the Spirit. It is this Body in which the Holy Ghost dwells and abides as the One Spirit of the One Body; and it is through the One Body that that One Spirit expresses Himself. One came then to see that the test of truth and error was to be found in the instinct (if one may use such a term) of the One Body as being the expression of the One Spirit. One learnt the practical application of the famous maxim of S. Vincent of Lerins: "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" One began to see that in the case of any theory or idea, the formulator of the said theory or idea had to show, not that it was plausible or arguable, but that it was what had always, at any rate implicitly, been the Mind of the One Body. It was no use for sectarians e.g. to start a theory of the Sacred Ministry which forced them to take a flying leap over fifteen centuries. That theory, however plausible or arguable, was not as a matter of fact the instinct of the One Body. And this test is always at hand and easy of application, because the appeal of the Truth is to history, not to argument.

To take an instance in what may be called a comparatively small matter. A Bishop wanted, in the interests presumably of some opportunism of the moment, to allow his clergy to use incense,

but to forbid their using it in the ordinary way of Catholic Christendom. He told one of his Priests that "experts" had told him that the earliest use of incense was what we may call the "still" use. Well! It did not perhaps matter much *per se*, but if that were so, why was the Bishop making a fuss about it? But the Priest pointed out that what the foolish "expert" had to show was why there had never been a "still use" of incense, either in East or West, ever since the first century. That apparently had not crossed the Bishop's mind. It is no use saying that we think it plausible or may be desirable. It is a question of the historical fact of the instinct of the One Body that is indwelt by the One Spirit. Every "burning question," as it successively arises in the "curious and carnal minds" of those who reject the testimony of the One Body, is to be brought to this unfailing test, viz.: "What does the One Body say or think or do in this matter?" It may be a matter of doctrine, it may be a matter of liturgical use, or it may be the question of divorce and so-called remarriage. The One Body is the test of truth or error. So I would mark my next milestone, "Catholicity the test of truth in faith, worship and morals."

It is difficult to place these milestones in their exact order. One truth after another rises like the stars in their courses, and each, as it appears, dominates one's thoughts for the time being;

but one cannot give an accurate chart, as if the influence of the one truth was complete before the next truth arose. But, roughly, I want to mark stages of spiritual progress. And I want to remark here that these stages of growth presuppose the solid and unchanging life of the root, viz.: the conviction of the Catholic Religion as the one and only Truth, i.e., as I have noted before, the one and only thing that takes cognisance of *all* the facts of the case. The mischief of these days is that people do not trust the root, but are perpetually digging it up to examine it. They cannot trust their foundations, and so are perpetually wasting their precious time by fiddling about with the foundation instead of boldly building upon it. Spiritual progress is, and must be, the outcome of fixed and firm convictions.

Bearing this in mind, I will ask my readers to follow me to another milestone. I found myself increasingly impressed with the practical result in everyday life of (*a*) the Eternity and (*b*) the Incomprehensibility of God. Here we find ourselves in the Holy of Holies of the Life of God as He is in Himself, quite irrespective of Creation at all. The Creation itself is the simple outcome of the Life of God, Who is Eternal and Incomprehensible.

Now in young days, if we thought about Eternity at all we probably thought of it as time infinitely prolonged, and if we thought about the Life of God, Three Persons and One God, we probably

took Him as an axiom, there before all worlds. But Eternity is not time infinitely prolonged ; and God's Revelation of Himself at the burning bush was as having no past and no future : " I am that I am." And our Lord asserts His Divinity by saying, " Before Abraham was I am." Not " I *was*," which would merely denote pre-existence and would be compatible with the Arian blasphemy ; whereas " I am " denotes Eternity. And it is characteristic of the crass stupidity of supposing Eternity to be time infinitely prolonged that we should have thought, as we did in our ignorance, of the Begetting of the Son and the Proceeding of the Holy Ghost as something over and finished. It was in reading Pearson on the Creed that the Truth as to the Eternal Generation of the Son and of the Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost first dawned upon me ; and I perceived that as the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit *never began*, so it is *never finished.* To put it in our stupid bungling way, one saw that the Life of God is that Eternal, and therefore ever *Present*, Act by which the Father is *always* begetting the Son and the Holy Ghost is *always* proceeding from the Father and the Son. To put it again in our bungling way, it comes to this, viz. : that in the dullest, stupidest, most depressing and apparently hopeless moment of everyday life the Father is, at that moment, begetting the Son as if He had never begotten Him before ; and the

Holy Ghost is proceeding from the Father and the Son as if He had never proceeded before! Alas! for our poor human words! They are quite inadequate to express Eternity, but they can suggest to us the real Truth about that absurd little moment that we call "Now."

Two practical thoughts force themselves upon us here. (*a*) The little moment that we call "now" is, and must always be, *the* great moment of life. In our blindness and foolishness we are always either looking backwards or looking forward to find great moments. People, for instance, are apt to draw a quite arbitrary and impossible line between what they are pleased to call "the Bible days" and what they call "these days." But what possible difference can there be between any one of "the Bible days" and an ordinary commonplace washing day in twentieth-century England? The "now" of the washing day is quite as solemn and blessed as the "now" of, let us say, the first Good Friday! How wonderful and how sweet is the even dim Vision in everyday life of the Eternity of God!

(*b*) That little moment that we call "now" is the outcome and the climax of all that has gone before. All the past days and all the past circumstances of our life have, as it were, led us by the hand and brought us up to the present moment and set us down there! The present moment is always the greatest moment, because it is the sum

of all preceding moments. And in that moment we stand over against that Eternal Generation of the Son and that Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost that is the Life of God. So it will be in the grave; so it will be in the moment of Resurrection. Not a ripple of a change will pass over the Life of God when the trumpet sounds and the dead are raised incorruptible. That Blessed Life will be just what it is to-day because the "Father is Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal: and yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal." So the simple song of created life, moment by moment, is "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come."

If this be the case of the Eternity of God, what about His Incomprehensibility? In our young and foolish days we thought that "Incomprehensible" meant something that we could not understand. One finds even learned men floundering about under this delusion. But the word "Incomprehensible" means that which cannot be "comprehended" by a line. However vast any created thing may be, sooner or later you come, as it were, to the edge of it, and beyond that edge is something that is not it. In a word, every created thing is "comprehensible." It is GOD alone who is Incomprehensible. As there is but One Eternal, so there is but One Incomprehensible; and as (to put it in our stupid way) God is Eternal because He is under no limitations of time, so He is Incompre-

hensible because He is under no limitation of space. Time and space have to do with things created. God is Eternal and Incomprehensible because He is Uncreate.

Now apply this Truth to everyday life, and what does it reveal to us? Why this: that wherever we may be or whatever we may be doing, there, nearer to us than the air that we breathe, this is going on, viz.: that the Father is begetting the Son and the Holy Ghost is proceeding from the Father and the Son! "If I climb up into Heaven Thou art there, if I go down to hell Thou are there also." The dear Curé d'Ars used to say in his simple, homely way, "We are in God as the fish is in the sea." What a light is thrown upon every-day life by the fact of the Incomprehensibility of God!

It is not too much to say that the secret of perfection lies in our knowledge of the truth as to those two little words "now" and "here." It is surely just this that so differentiates the lives of the blessed Saints from our petty, weary, empty lives. I shall mark the next milestone "Eternal, Incomprehensible." "Now—Here."

It is strange that we should only after the lapse of many years begin to realize the meaning of words that have been familiar to us all our lives. We learnt at our Mother's knee to say that the inward spiritual Grace of Holy Baptism is "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."

As the sense of Sacramental Grace dawned upon us we learned something as to Baptismal Regeneration: we realized that we were members of Christ and children of God because we had been born of water and of the Spirit; we could see the vanity of a non-sacramental religion. But what about the death unto sin? This is what the Catechism puts in the forefront. The new birth unto righteousness may be said to be the effect of death unto sin. But what about this "death unto sin?" I should imagine that living, as we so largely did, almost exclusively on the purely moral plane as regards our religion, we thought, if we thought about it at all, that it was a *façon de parler* that expressed the necessity of striving to subdue our sins and resist our temptations. We could see that the new birth was the Gift of Grace, but, practically, the death unto sin seemed to have to be achieved by our own efforts. But all along the Catechism had cried to us that "a death unto sin" was the first *inward spiritual Grace* of Holy Baptism: the first gift bestowed upon us in and by that wonderful Sacrament. Is it not so that while we had come to realize the Sacraments as means of grace and pledges of assurance, they had been, in our minds, largely detached from their context; viz., the Sacred Humanity? We could see that the outward visible sign was the actual means whereby we received the inward spiritual Grace: we had emerged out of the darkness of a quite illogical

Protestantism as regards the Sacraments; but we had not as yet clearly grasped the nature of that mysterious something that we called "grace." But when we emerged on to what I will call the "physical" plane we began to see that Grace is, and can be, nothing but incorporation into the Sacred Humanity. When once we realize that, we have not far to travel before we begin to realize that "so many of us as were baptized into JESUS CHRIST were baptized into His Death." That we were crucified dead and buried with Christ by Baptism into death; that the world was crucified unto us and that we were crucified unto the world; all this had not in younger days been more to us than the flourish of a fine phrase. It meant, as we thought (if we thought about it at all), that we must "try to be good"; and that was about all! As usual, we were, in our Protestant blindness, almost entirely subjective in our religion. S. John seemed to us to be somewhat exaggerating when he said of the baptized, "They cannot sin because they are born of God." This seemed to us somewhat of a Calvinistic text, and we did not much like to think about it. But S. John was not in the least, thank God, a Calvinist. He knew perfectly well what he was talking about. "All our fathers were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They had all partaken of the actual *de facto* deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. So far as the deliverance went they could not be bondmen

in Egypt again. But there was no physical bar to their returning to Egypt if any of them deliberately set his mind to do so. So with the baptized. They have been crucified with Christ, and so live by the power of His Resurrection; but if they deliberately choose to descend from the Cross and return to the prison house of Satan, there is no physical impossibility in their doing so. *In so far* as they are crucified and buried with Christ they "cannot sin"; but if they refuse to remain upon the Cross until the eventide they lose their liberty by coming out of the state of salvation.

My point is, that the death unto sin is God's gracious Gift bestowed upon us in Baptism, and to be partakers of the Sacred Humanity is, in this natural life, to be "as He is" in this world: i.e., crucified! So it became apparent that our part in the matter is to "abide" in Him. Calvary is the Home of the soul until we are quite dead. We are placed there by no act of our own; all that we have to do is to "abide" there. So one began to see, alas! very late in the day, that the complete mortification of the old nature, the "utter abolishing" of the whole body of sin, is the common-sense way for a Christian to live in this world. Morning by morning, as we wake afresh to consciousness, our first waking thought is to be, not what we are going to do that day, but that that day is to find us steadfast to Calvary and crucified there with Christ. The life of mortification is not

the singular vocation of the few. It is the common calling of all the baptized. We love to read the lives of the Saints. Those mortified lives are what we expect of them. But the Trappist, let us say, who wakes to his new day of prayer, silence and toil under his Rule, is merely carrying out in a practical way the condition of baptized life; and we who are called to live in the world have an equal vocation with him to crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin. And how the realization of this truth brings to light the dignity of our everyday calling! The Trappist and we are alike bound to stir up and to use day by day the Gift that is in us, i.e., the Gift of death unto sin! Now that we *know* that we have this Gift within us, we have but got to draw upon it moment by moment. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." CHRIST, crucified through weakness but living by the Power of God, *liveth in me*! I was immensely struck many years ago by the fact of S. Peter walking upon the water. One saw how the last step off the ship's ladder on to the water was the saying good-bye to all natural manner of living, and the entrance upon an absolutely supernatural way of life. He walked on the water to go to Jesus, and could not sink. But when, for the moment, he began to be afraid he returned to the natural life, and therefore began at once to sink. He cries to our Lord, Who catches him and—puts

him back on the supernatural plane again! I will mark this next milestone, "Dead indeed unto sin, alive unto God."

One last milestone I should like to note, and I shall call it "simplicity." It is not very easy to speak of this milestone, but I want to try to convey something of what I feel about it.

As years go on one finds, I think, that one's religion becomes more and more simple in the truest sense of the word. Father Faber says (as I think so truly) that if a man rightly grasps the truth of his own creation all other truth is bound to follow (or words to that effect). And I think one may say conversely that if a man is hazy about any portion of revealed truth it is because, for the moment, he does not quite grasp the fact of his own creation. That God should of His Own free choice and Will have created me for Himself is obviously the key, and the only key, to the understanding of my own life. That God should of His Own free choice and Will have created others than myself is the key, and the only key, to the understanding of their lives. God, as S. Ignatius tells me, is "the End of my being," i.e., the One and only Reason why I am at this moment alive at all. So, at long last, we come to the quite simple issue of each and every moment. Three factors, and three only, are there: (*a*) God, (*b*) His Creation, (*c*) the relation in which His Creation stands to Him. I myself am just an integral part of that

whole Creation ; and so, at each and every moment I find these three factors in my personal life : (*a*) God, (*b*) myself, (*c*) the relation in which I stand to God. It is of this surely that Newman is thinking when he speaks of the state of mind in which there are " only two luminously self-evident beings in the Universe : viz., God and myself." And here we catch a glimpse of our Lord's meaning when He says, " If thine eye be *single*, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Now we English Churchpeople stand at a certain disadvantage as regards this simplicity of life and outlook, in that we have had to spend so much of our time in contending for the ordinary decencies of Christian worship, devotion and life. But, as I have noticed before, when we have gained everything for which as Catholics we contend, e.g., the daily Eucharist everywhere as a matter of course, the free and unfettered access to all the Sacraments as a matter of course, and the free use of all Catholic Devotions that have fed the sanctity of the Catholic Saint ; when we have got all this we are just at the starting-point as regards our Christian life. These things are all means to an end, viz. : to the absolute simplicity of the life in Christ ; the simplicity of created life in its relation to God. In far-away days one used to dream of Catholic worship and Catholic Devotion. In time one achieved both the one and the other ; and one then found that they were not the " end "

that once one fancied they must be but almost, as it were, the starting-point. One had reached the ordinary furniture, so to speak, of the Christian life and could now live it; and the beautiful words ring in one's heart, "He brought them out that He might bring them in." We had, by long efforts, recovered the rights of which Protestantism had robbed us. We ought not to have had to contend for them. The conflict had been, in one way of speaking, a long hindrance. It had seriously delayed us on our journey. At long last we have but one life to live; and that life was given us, not that we should make a splash in the world by doing this and achieving that, but that we might grow in the absolute simplicity of the knowledge of God. I do not mean that the time was wholly wasted and thrown way: the very conflict had taught us much of God and His ways. But had all these things been granted at the outset, as in a normal condition of Church life they would have been, we should have been quietly "flourishing" all along "in the courts of the House of our God."

One cannot help noticing, in conversation on Church matters, how that the getting of this or the achieving of that in respect of the ordinary decencies of Christian worship and devotion seems to be regarded as the end towards which we are working, and how little there seems to be of realization that these things are not the end, but the starting-point, of the Christian life. The simplicity of the issue

as between God at this moment and His Creation at this moment seems rather conspicuous by its absence in the thoughts of Churchmen of to-day. No doubt it is there, hidden away at the back of the mind, but it seems to be quite overshadowed by the apparent exigencies of the moment. To use the pregnant expression of the warning of Hosea, men to-day seem to be staying too long "in the place of the breaking forth of children"; and this, as the blessed prophet tells us, is the work of unwisdom! Instead of using the Sacrifice of the Mass men are chattering about it. When they ought to be "fallen as dead" in the Adoration of our Lord in His Blessed Sacramental Life, they are surrounding themselves with a mist and cloud of verbiage, the object of which is to excuse themselves from the Adoration of the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament. Alas, for the waste of time in the loss of simplicity! It is the simplicity of unshaken faith as the answer to God's Gracious Revelation of Himself that fascinates us in the lives of the Blessed Saints. We have there life reduced to its simplest terms. Moment by moment, under any conceivable circumstances, the whole life is dominated by the three simple factors, viz.: God, His Creation, and the relation in which the creature stands to God. The noise and din of the world, with its conflicts, its questionings, and its surmises, seem dim and far away, as the sounds of ordinary life were quenched to the three blessed Apostles on the

Mount of Transfiguration. They simply cannot attend to them or be worried by them, for the Truth has " made them free." S. Paul and S. Silas, their backs torn with the scourges and their feet made fast in the stocks in the horrors of " the inner prison " at Philippi, had no time to think of these things when at midnight they sang their Office, as the obvious thing to do, in that awful place. So it always is with the Saints. In their joyous simplicity they, moment by moment, just " take God at His Word," with the result that, as the hymn says, their lives " are all sunshine in the Glory of the Lord."

Why is not life just like this to every one of us ? It is because we are *not* simple. We love to flounder about in what Gilbert so wittily calls " a complicated state of mind." Just every now and then we degenerate Christians catch the vision of the Divine Simplicity, and it is like the sun breaking out on a cloudy day. Is it not so that when we come to try to analyse our pleasure in the beautiful things that have been seen by those of us who have the privilege of foreign travel, we shall find that, at bottom, they spoke to us of God ? We were for the moment removed from the ordinary cares and burdens of life, and things were quite simple. We were in a condition to see the simplicity of beauty as being the reflection of God. Again, has it not been our experience that, when we have realized some great spiritual truth, we

have been caught up into the joy of that realization of truth, so that, for the moment, we see everything as it were through the medium of that truth? And we know how, when this is the case, the dullest street in the stupidest town seems all transfigured as we see it through the window of the Catholic Religion.

And, conversely, I think one finds that when, at any moment, one has a special vision or a special practical realization of some spiritual truth, it seems to bind itself on to some special beautiful thing that lies within one's recollection. And it seems to me that we have here an instance, however feeble, of that simplicity that sees all things in God and God in all things, that "singleness" of eye that fills the whole body with light.

My last milestone seems to sum up all the others, as naturally it would do; and I should like to mark it with these delightful words:

> "If our love were but more simple
> We should take Him at His Word:
> And our lives would be all sunshine
> In the glory of the Lord."

Yes! All our spiritual growth and development is just to bring us to that absolute simplicity that is the Image and Likeness of God; and, speaking for myself, I humbly trust that it is to this that all God's untold goodness to me in my long life is bringing me. From the first chapter in Tasmania and Sydney up to the last chapter in Wells, in all

the circumstances and blessings of those long years, and in spite of all the dismal failures that mark every stage of the journey, the Purpose of God has been to bring me to Himself ; and as one realizes this one feels, as dear Jacques Mallac said about his Communion, "After that, nothing matters." Still the goodness of God goes on amid the most apparently unlikely and depressing circumstances. Evil, with all its consequences, is after all but an incident in the history of Creation ; and, caught up into the simplicity that is the outcome of the knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus, we cannot fret about the present or have any fears about the future ; and as our fathers sang their glad song of triumph when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore, so, moment by moment, we cry to the tyrant and would-be spoiler of the Creation as a whole, and of our own life in particular, "Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief ? Whereas the Goodness of God endureth *yet, daily* ! "

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